

Kitāb al-Tawheed

كتاب التوحيد

*The Basis of Islam
and the Reality of Monotheism*

Vol. 3

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Volume 3

Principles and Foundations of Tawheed

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Part VI

Tawheed - its Essence and Reality

1. Introduction

Earlier in this work we outlined the meaning of the Islamic testimony of faith, that there is no god/deity *except* Allah. Underpinning the core meaning of this doctrine, is that there is no entity or being that possesses the attributes of divinity, namely having absolute independence of action, particularly with regards to the act(s) of creation from nothingness or non-existence. Whether those acts relate to shaping, forming, managing, fashioning, commanding and forbidding, without restraint upon will; with no limitation, compulsion or necessity. None possesses these attributes *except* Allah. This is in accordance with the absolute rational necessity regarding the true God, who must be characterised by the notion of self-sustenance, in other words, the Necessarily Existent. In turn, that means absolute independence and self-sufficiency from anything else. He is ‘One’; He does not divide, have parts nor offspring. He retains absolute solidity, meaning without hollowness, defects, deficiencies. He retains absolute power and perfection, being comprehensive in knowledge that covers what has been and what will be, together with what *could* be and what *would* be should it occur. His omnipotence is above all possibilities.

No being or entity possesses any of these attributes *except* Allah. Any attribution of these aspects to any other is utter fabrication and falsehood. It is borne of baseless imagination having no foundation in truth nor reality. The testimony of Islam therefore, is to affirm all the attributes of divinity for Allah the Exalted, while at the same time, absolutely and unequivocally *denying* any aspect of divinity to anything *other* than Allah. Hence, this means to absolutely reject every supposed ‘god’ or every ‘peer’ or ‘lord’ besides Allah. There is complete disassociation and disavowal from them. The testimony

requires disbelief in all false deities, which is ultimately what is meant by disbelief in *Tāghut*.

In the previous chapters of the book we have established with certitude the complete equivalence in meaning for the following phrases, despite how they may be expressed. Namely,

أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنْ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
=
أَنْ تُشْرِكَ اللَّهَ، وَتَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنْ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
=
تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَلَا تَشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئاً
=
تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَتَكْفُرُ بِمَا دُونَهُ
=
تَوْحِيدُ اللَّهِ
=
(أَنْ تُحَقِّقَ) عِبَادَةُ اللَّهِ، وَمَعْرِفَةُ اللَّهِ

To testify that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah =

To submit oneself to Allah, bearing witness that there is no god/deity except Allah alone, without partner and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger =

To worship Allah alone and not associate anything with Him =

To worship Allah and disbelieve in all else besides Him =

Tawheed of Allah =

(To be cognisant of) the recognition and worship of Allah.

This is by establishing the clear proof that the diversity of words and phrases, with the complete identical meaning of the sentences contained therein, comes from the Seal of Prophethood, Muhammad the infallible Prophet of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family.

2. Categories or types of *Tawheed*

The conceptualisation of *Tawheed*, monotheism and the Oneness of Allah in Islam is but a single and actually straightforward concept. It is the testimonial that there is no god except Allah. Furthermore, this means that all attributes related to *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) are exclusively to Allah the Almighty, while at the same time absolutely and categorically denying that any of these divine qualities are attributable to anyone or anything other than Allah.

However despite this, the foundational myths and ideas of the *mushrikeen* are quite numerous. They are intertwined, often complex despite being inherently inconsistent and fundamentally contradictory. Given this, scholars may well need to provide additional clarification by way of categorising *Tawheed* into different types or sub-divisions in order to address the various forms and guises that *Shirk* may take. Moreover, by doing this, the frameworks that are formulated may help to guide people away from the multitude of overlapping darkness to which *Shirk* is shrouded in, to the single light of *Tawheed*. Accordingly, we may therefore provide a categorisation to *Tawheed* in the following manner:

1. *Tawheed al-Dhātiyyah al-Ilāhiyyah* [تَوْحِيدُ الذَّاتِيَّةِ إِلَهِيَّةً] - Monotheism as it relates to the Divine Essence and Godhood. Some may refer to this as being *Tawheed al-Aniyah* [تَوْحِيدُ الْأَنِيَّةِ] - ‘Monotheism of Existence.’
2. *Tawheed al-Khāliqiyyah* [تَوْحِيدُ الْخَالقِيَّةِ] - *Tawheed* as it pertains to the matter of creation. This includes the aspect of creation itself; formation, shaping and bringing this into existence from non-existence.

3. *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* [توحيد الربوبية] – Monotheism of Lordship Here there are two sub-divisions to this:
 - a) *Tawheed al-Mulk wal' Tadbeer wal' Taṣṣaraf al-Takweeni* – [توحيد الملك والتدبیر والتصریف التکوینی] Sovereignty, Management, and Universal Control (or: Cosmic Control)
 - b) *Tawheed al-Ḥākimiyah wal' Tashreeh* [توحيد الحاکمیة والتشريع] – Monotheism of Governance and Legislation (which is equivalent to (a) above);

At this juncture, critics or even sceptics may postulate the question – why are you abandoning or turning away from the well-established tripartite division of *Tawheed*, enumerated as being: *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*? That division is commonplace and has been widely taken on board without necessarily being properly scrutinised. No doubt the backing of the petrodollar from the Saudi establishment has made this seem as though the tripartite division of *Tawheed* is a matter revealed from the heavens, and/or being based upon an extensive study of the legal texts, the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, as well as the statements of the *Salaf* – the earliest generations of Islam. Naturally many view the tripartite division as matter which is self-evident, needing no qualification, or even justification. Yet nothing can be further from the truth. To begin, consider the wording as expressed in the following edict from the *Fatawā'* of the Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and *Iftā'*:

Fatwa no. [8493]

Q1. What are the types of *Tawheed* and what is the definition of each type?

A. There are three types of *Tawheed*: *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*. *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* is testifying that Allah alone is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Giver and the Taker of life, and the Controller of all affairs in the dominion of the heavens and the earth. It also means attributing Governance and Legislation only to Allah, through sending His Messengers and revelation of His Books. Allah the Almighty says: 'All creation and command belong to Him. Exalted be Allah, Lord of all the

worlds,' [7: 54]. *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* is the worship of Allah alone; nothing else is to be worshipped, invoked or sought for help. Vows and sacrificial animals must be dedicated exclusively to Him. Allah the Almighty says: 'Say, "My prayers and sacrifice, my life and death, are all for Allah, Lord of all the Worlds." He has no partner. This is what I am commanded, and I am the first to devote myself to Him,' [6: 162/163]. And He says: 'So pray to your Lord and make your sacrifice to Him alone,' [108: 2]. *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt* means describing Allah the way He has described Himself, and the way His Messenger described Him; naming Allah with the Names that He has named Himself with, and His Messenger named Him with in the *Sahīh ahādīth*, without *Tashbeeh* (comparison), *Tamtheel* (likening Him to creation), *Tā'weel* (interpretation) or *Ta'til* (denial) 'There is nothing like Him: He is the All Hearing, the All Seeing,' [42: 11].¹

Also one can find in *Fatawā' Nur 'ala al-Darb* the following:

Q. How does a Muslim attain *Tawheed*?

A. May Allah have mercy upon him, He answered (as follows): *Tawheed* is achieved by *Ikhlaṣ* (sincerity) in testifying that *Lā illaha illa Allah* (there is no god except Allah), which means *Lā Ma'bud bi-haqq illa Allah* [none is worthy of worship by right (or in truth) except Allah]. Everything that is worshipped besides Allah is false. Allah, the Blessed and Almighty said: 'It is Allah alone who is the Truth, and whatever else they invoke is sheer falsehood,' [22: 62]. *Tawheed* is also attained, specifically *Tawheed al-Ittibāh* by adherence to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, without deviation from it, nor by (seeking to) outrun it in enthusiasm, nor fall behind in negligence.²

Here one can clearly see from the aforementioned text the formulation as expressed that:

¹ Here we have drawn upon the standard English translation that is currently available: <https://abdurrahman.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/en_01_majmoo_alfatawa_iftaa_col01.pdf> (Accessed 8 Jan-2025). As a useful resource, translations of these *legal responsa*, including that from Ibn Bāz can be accessed online here: <<https://abdurrahman.org/fatawa-alifta/>>

² *Ibid*. English translations of the *Fatawā'* of Ibn Bāz [*Nur 'ala al-Darb*] are accessible on the latter link mentioned above.

الله = المعبود بحق

al-Ilāh = *al-Ma'bud bi-haqq* (the One who is worshipped by right).

Next, there is the following which is cited in *'Iānatul Mustafeed bi Sharh Kitāb al-Tawheed* by Ṣalīḥ ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān:

The Shaykh (*sic. MIAW*) may Allah have mercy upon him said (regarding the) Chapter – ‘Concerning those who would deny any of the Names and Attributes,’ meaning, what is the ruling upon this? What is the evidence for it? (Here) the relevance of the chapter lies in the fact that *Tawheed* is of three-types: *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*. The majority of this (present) book focuses upon the second type, which is *Tawheed al-'Ibādah*, given that it is the central point of contention between the Messenger and their respective peoples. It is also the most emphasized and frequently mentioned in the Qur'ān, being the subject (matter) of its call and foundation. This is the meaning of the testimonial *Lā illāha illa Allah* (there is no god except Allah). For that reason Allah has created the creation, as He the Almighty says: ‘*I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me*,’ [51: 56].

Regarding the first type, which is *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, most nations acknowledge this, particularly those (people) who lived at the time when the Qur'ān was revealed, such as the kuffār of the Quraysh and the Arab mushrikeen. They accepted *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* as they believed that Allah is the Creator, the Provider, the Giver of life and death, and the Disposer of affairs. They admitted this, as shown by many Qur'ānic verses, namely: ‘*If you [Prophet] ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and earth?’ they are sure to say, ‘They were created by the Almighty, the All Knowing,’* [43: 9]. ‘*If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, ‘Allah,’ so why are they so deluded?*’ [43: 87]. ‘*Say, ‘Who is the Lord of the seven heavens? Who is the Lord of the Mighty Throne?’ and they will reply, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Will you not be mindful?’ Say, ‘Who holds control of everything in His hand? Who protects, while there is no protection against Him, if you know [so much]?’* [23: 86/88].

This is matter which is established. But it doesn't allow one entry into the fold of Islam. Whoever acknowledges and limits themselves

to it without it being accompanied by the second type, and it is *Tawheed al-'Ibādah*, fulfilling its requirements, is not considered as being Muslim, even if they accept *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*. Regarding the third type, it is *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*. In reality it is subsumed under the rubric of *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*. Given this, some of the scholars have made division into two: *Tawheed al-Ma'rifa wal-Ithbāt*, and it is *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah wal-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt* and it is *Tawheed al-'Ilmi*. *Tawheed* in relation to *Talab wal Qasad*, and it is *Tawheed al-Talabi al-'Ilmi*, and it is *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*.³

Al-Fawzān is one of the leaders, for some a totem, of the sect of Wahhābism. A member of the (in)famous ‘Council of Senior Scholars,’ in the tyrannical Saudi kingdom. The excerpt quote provided above addresses many issues, including the matter of *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* in their perception. As a concept, they hold that *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* is equal to *Tawheed al-'Ibādah*; in turn that rests upon acceptance of the idea that god, *al-Ilāh* [الله] is equivalent to one that is worshipped, *al-Ma'bud* [المعبود]. Secondly, that the *kuffār* among the Quraysh and Arabs more generally at the time of revelation, accepted and affirmed what they define as being *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*; believing that Allah is the Creator, the giver of life and death, and that He manages all affairs. Yet despite this, it was insufficient overall for their entrance into the fold of Islam.

Following on from this, the confirmation that *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* is insufficient by itself to enter into the fold of Islam is repeated and emphatically confirmed by way of the following explanation that is outlined in *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahāwiyyah* by another totem of Wahhābism, ‘Abd al-Aziz al-Rajhi:

We say, assured by the *Tawfeeq* of Allah, regarding the *Tawheed* of Allah, that Allah is One; He has no partner, there being nothing like unto Him. Second, *al-'Imān* in the matter of lordship of Allah, and belief that Allah is the *Rabb* (Lord), and other than Him is subjected to his Lordship. He is *al-Rabb*, He is the *Rabb* of (His) servants, and others are to be loved, as He, may He be glorified said: ‘*Praise belongs*

³ Ṣalīḥ ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān *'Iānatul Mustafeed bi Sharh Kitāb al-Tawheed*, [Vol. 3, p. 243 (Shamela edition)].

to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,’ [1: 2]. He is Lord of the Worlds. All besides Allah is His creation, He the Almighty is Lord of creation, all others subjected to His dominion. Third, (is the) affirmation that Allah is the Creator, all besides Him the creation. As He the Almighty said: ‘*Allah is the Creator of all things,’ [39: 62], ‘And who created all things and made them to an exact measure,’ [25: 2].* Fourth, the firm belief that Allah is *al-Mālik*, while all besides Him are (under His) dominion. He is *al-Mālik* of everything; everything besides Him being subjected to His dominion. Fifth, the firm belief that Allah is *al-Mudabbir* (One who manages and controls all affairs), all besides Him are subject to His management. He maintains creation, gives life, causes death. He provides sustenance, being *al-Rāziq* (the Sustainer). He sends down the rain, He is the Cause of all causes. He bestows honour, causes humiliation; lowers and raises (ranks). He is the Manager of all affairs, Exalted be He, all others besides Him, subjected to His management.

By way of this, the individual establishes the Oneness of Allah in relation to His Lordship; firmly establishing the existence of Allah and (the) belief that Allah is the Necessarily Existent (Being) by His essence. Confirming the Lordship of Allah, and belief that He is *al-Rabb*, all besides Him subservient. And confirming that Allah is *al-Khāliq* (the Creator), all besides Him the creation. Confirming that Allah is *al-Mālik*, and all besides Him subject to His dominion. And confirming that Allah is *al-Mudabbir*, all besides Him are subject to His management. However, this *Tawheed* is not sufficient for true ‘*Imān*, or salvation from the fire of hell, nor does it make a person a *Muslim*. This type of *Tawheed* was acknowledged by the *kuffār*, the *mushrikeen* of Quraysh. Allah the Almighty says: ‘*If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, ‘God,’ so why are they so deluded?’ [43: 87]; ‘*If you ask the disbelievers who created the heavens and earth and who harnessed the sun and moon, they are sure to say, ‘God.’ Then why do they turn away from Him?’ [29: 61].* He the Almighty says: ‘*Say [Prophet], ‘Who owns the earth and all who live in it, if you know [so much]?’ and they will reply, ‘God.’ Say, ‘Will you not take heed?’ Say, ‘Who is the Lord of the seven heavens? Who is the Lord of the Mighty Throne?’ and they will reply, ‘God.’ Say, ‘Will you not be mindful?’ Say, ‘Who holds control of everything in**

*His hand? Who protects, while there is no protection against Him, if you know [so much]?’ and they will reply, ‘God.’ Say, ‘Then how can you be so deluded?’ The fact is, We brought them the truth and they are lying,’ [23: 83/90]. ‘*Say [Prophet], ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs everything?’ They are sure to say, ‘God.’ Then say, ‘So why do you not take heed of Him?’ [10: 31].**

This type of *Tawheed* was acknowledged by the *kuffār* of the Quraysh. Yet it didn’t bring them into the fold of Islam. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him fought them, deeming their wealth and lives lawful to appropriate because they didn’t fulfil its necessary requirements, (namely), *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah wal ‘Ibādah*.

The second: *Tawheed al-Asmā’ wa’l-Šifāt*. It is the ‘*Imān* and acknowledgment of Allah’s most beautiful names and His lofty attributes which are confirmed by way of the Book and the *Sunnah*. And it is ‘*Imān* in them and affirmation of them for Allah, which is befitting of His Majestic Greatness, without (any) distortion, negation or comparison. (In relation to) *al-Asmā’ wa’l-Šifāt*, they are *Tawqifiyyah*; nobody has the right to bestow such names or attributes by Himself. Instead, *al-Asmā’ wa’l-Šifāt* are *Tawqifiyyah*, established only way of the Book and the *Sunnah*. Unless it is proven by the Book and the *Sunnah*, we stop and do not confirm it. It is required to have ‘*Imān* in (them) and acknowledge them without (any) distortion, negation or comparison. And this type of *Tawheed* was acknowledged by the *kuffār* of the Quraysh; they acknowledged (as such). And the *mushrikeen* of acknowledge the genus of this type, none among them partaking in denial of any of *al-Asmā’ wa’l-Šifāt* except as it related to the name of ‘*al-Rahmān*’ specifically, thus Allah revealed: ‘*Yet they disbelieve in the Lord of Mercy,’ [13: 30].*

When the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave the order to write the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, he instructed the scribe with – ‘*Write, in the Name of Allah, al-Rahmān, al-Raheem.*’ Suhayl, who was the negotiator on behalf of the *mushrikeen* said: ‘*Write in your name, O Allah, for we don’t know of *al-Rahmān* and *al-Raheem*.*’ Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy upon him said: ‘*It is apparent*

that their denial of *al-Rahman* was born of obstinacy and stubbornness. The name *al-Rahman* was known, even (found) in the poetry of *al-Jāhiliyya*, ascribing *al-Rahman* to Allah the Mighty and Sublime, as the poet said: ‘What the Beneficent wills [either] binds or sets free.’⁴ The denial of the name ‘*al-Rahman*’ (by the *mushrikeen*) was borne of obstinacy, stubbornness. They were not reported to have objected to any of the Names of Allah bar this specifically. This type of *Tawheed* which is the *Tawheed al-Asmā’ wa ’l-Šifāt* is not sufficient for *al-’Imān* and al-Islam. A person doesn’t enter into Islam until they have affirmed and acknowledged what is *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah wal ’Ibādah*. Namely to say, this type of *Tawheed*, which is *Tawheed al-Asmā’ wa ’l-Šifāt* like the previous type of *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* is not sufficient on its own to be considered as a Muslim, a *mu’min* (true believer) (or) *mu’wāhid* (adherent of monotheism). It doesn’t ensure salvation from the fire of hell nor entry into paradise, until (the individual) affirms the Oneness of Allah in relation to His divinity.

The third type – *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah wal ’Ibādah*, and it is the Oneness of Allah by way of the acts of His servants. The first type – it is *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, the Oneness of Allah by way of His acts as *al-Rabb*, (relating to) the creation, the provision, the giving of life and death, this is the acts of Allah. You affirm Allah’s Oneness by recognition of these acts as His acts alone. *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, is the Oneness of Allah by way of His acts. Regarding *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, it is relating to the *Tawheed* of Allah by way of the acts of His servants. (That is) your actions as a human, such as *Šalāh*, *Zakāt*, *Šawm*, *Hajj*, the honouration of your parents, the maintenance of familial ties; enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. By refraining from the prohibited matters, you draw closer to Allah, (establishing) His Oneness by undertaking these acts only for Him. You perform them sincerely for Allah, seeking His pleasure and the hereafter. This is *Tawheed al-’Ibādah*.

⁴ Here, one can refer to the extensive discussion of the names *al-Rahman* and *al-Raheem* as it is set out in the *Tafsir* of al-Tabari: (English) *Selections from the Comprehensive Exposition of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur'an*: Volume I, al-Tabari, Translated by Professor Scott Lucas [The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge, 2017, p. 107]. al-Tabari places these lines as being from Salāma ibn Jandal al-Sa'di.

Tawheed al-’Ibādah is the first and last call of the Messengers. (It is) the beginning of this path, the first juncture for the one seeking the path to Allah. It is the foremost message of the Messengers, as Allah the Almighty has informed us about the Prophets. Allah the Exalted says: ‘*We sent Noah to his people. He said, ‘My people, serve Allah, for He is your only god,’* [23: 23].⁵ *This Tawheed, the Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah, is beginning and end of the Deen; (it is) its outward and inner essence, (being the) first and last Dawah of the Messengers.* (It is) the departure point of the path, the first juncture for the seeker on the path to Allah. And it is what provides entry into (being) a Muslim and Islam, and (upon) what one departs the *Dunya* with. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said in a *Šaħiħ hadith*: ‘*If ones last words are – there is no god but Allah, he will enter Jannah.*’

This *Tawheed* was the reason behind Allah inaugurating creation, (for which He) sent the Messengers and (by which) Allah revealed the Book. For this reason, the striving of *Jihād* was made, the making of the coming hour of truth, and (to which) the enormous events of the hereafter will occur. It inaugurates the division of mankind into the happy and the wretched; *kuffār* and *mu’mineen*. And this *Tawheed* is the final goal which is beloved and pleasing to Allah. This *Tawheed* is a goal to which Allah the Mighty and Sublime loves. This *Tawheed* which is the root issue upon which disputation arose between the Prophets and Messengers, (both in) ancient and modern times. The Prophets and Messengers over this area with them specifically, as it concerned this *Tawheed*. *Differing from Tawheed al-Rububiyyah and Tawheed al-Asmā’ wa ’l-Šifāt, these two areas of Tawheed are instinctive and universally acknowledged by all of creation, bar some dissenting groups whose fitra (natural disposition) had become corrupted, and whose insight was blind.* Other than that, all creation recognises *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā’ wa ’l-Šifāt*. Opposition and disputation towards the Messengers and Prophets occurred specifically in relation to this *Tawheed*, (namely), *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah wal ’Ibādah*. *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* and *Tawheed al-*

⁵ At this juncture, a further five-Qur’ānic verses are quoted: [7: 65], [11: 61, 84], [16: 36] and [21: 25]. Given the already excessively long quotation, these have been omitted from the translation for ease of perusal.

Asmā' wa 'l-Şifāt are that which is the means and purpose leading to the ultimate objective, namely *al-Uluhiyyah* and *al-'Ibādah*.

Tawheed al-Rububiyyah and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa 'l-Şifāt* relate to the recognition of your Lord, by way of His Acts, Names and Attributes. After you know your Lord, you worship and draw near to Him; dedicating your worship sincerely to Him. Therefore, *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa 'l-Şifāt* relates to the undertaking of your Lord via His Names and recognition through his Attributes and Acts. You discern your object of worship, then begin to worship Him with sincerity. Some scholars, such as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, placed the division of *Tawheed* into two (distinct) categories. (Of this categorisation) they said: *Tawheed* is divided into two-parts, the division resting in relation to the predicate and its construction. They said, the division is into two, the first division being *Tawheed al-Ma'rifa wal-Ithbāt* (in relation to recognition and affirmation); the second division relating to *Talab wal-Qasad*. *Tawheed* in relation to *al-Ma'rifa wal-Ithbāt*, and this encompasses *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa 'l-Şifāt*. It is called *Tawheed al-Ma'rifa wal-Ithbāt*, it is (also) called *Tawheed al-Qawli* and *Tawheed al-'Itiqādi*, *Tawheed al-'Ilmi al-Khabari*. The second, *Tawheed al-'Irādah wa Talab* and it is *Tawheed al-'Ibādah*.

The scholars said: the first type of *Tawheed* is in relation to *al-Ma'rifa wal-Ithbāt*, as mentioned by the scholar Ibn Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, and others. It is affirming the true nature of *al-Rabb*, his Names, Attributes and Acts. It also includes affirming His *Qadā'* and His *Qadr*, His *Hikmah*. The Qur'ān has made this type of *Tawheed* abundantly clear, as per the beginning of *Surah al-Hadeed*, *Surah Taha*, and the end of *Surah al-Hashr*; (also) the opening of *Surah al-Mulk*, *al-Ikhlas* and in His saying, the Almighty and Exalted: 'So [you believers], say, 'We believe in God and in what was sent down to us and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we devote ourselves to Him,' [2: 136].⁶

⁶ 'Abd al-Aziz al-Rajhi, *Sharḥ al-Aqeedah al-Tahāwiyyah* [p. 7, (Shamela edition)].

'Abd al-Aziz al-Rajhi is from among the contemporary totems of Wahhābism. From the aforementioned lengthy excerpt, he furnishes us with several points. The first of which, in their viewpoint is the following: *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* = *Tawheed al-'Ibādah* = *Tawheed* of Allah by way of the acts of His servants. In other words, by way of acts undertaken by your own volition, be that prayer, fasting, charity, undertaking pilgrimage and the like. Enjoining the good, prohibiting the evil and refraining from that which is prohibited are additional ways to draw closer to Allah. The *Tawheed* of Allah by way of these actions is that they are dedicated for His sake, seeking His pleasure and the hereafter; this is what is *Tawheed al-'Ibādah*. Regarding the second and third points arising from this, we have the blind assertion that the *kuffār* of the Quraysh acknowledged '*Tawheed al-Asmā' wa 'l-Şifāt*', bar the name '*al-Rahman*' out of obstinacy and stubbornness. And lastly, that *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* is construed as the beginning and end of the *Deen*, its inward and outward aspects, while at the same time being the paramount and last call of the Prophets, the departure point on the spiritual pathway; the opening juncture for the seeker on his/her journey to Allah. It is also the first requirement for entrance into Islam, and the final point at its departure from it.

Next, we have the following citation which is found in *al-Intiṣār Ahl al-Sunnah wal' Ḥadīth fi Radd Abāṭeel Ḥasan al-Mālikī* by 'Abd al-Muhsin ibn Ḥamad al-'Abbād al-Badr. It outlines confirmation of what has been previously mentioned, together with the claim yet again that it is based upon a comprehensive review of the texts of revelation, the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*:

The divisions of *Tawheed* as per *Ahl al-Sunnah* are threefold: *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa 'l-Şifāt*. (Regarding) *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, it is the *Tawheed* of Allah by way of the acts of His servants, like *al-Duā'* (supplication), seeking help, refuge; the offering of sacrifice, making vows and other forms stemming from the divisions of '*Ibādah*'. It is required that all of them must be directed by the servant exclusively to Allah the Almighty without associating any partner with Him concerning that.

Tawheed al-Rububiyyah is the *Tawheed* of Allah by way of His actions, like (the matter of) creation, providing provision, bestowing of life and death, governance of the universe and other than that, by way

of acts that are unique to Allah in that respect, and He has no partner in relation to them.

Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt is confirming what Allah has confirmed for Himself, and what His Messenger has too regarding Names and Attributes, which is all within a manner befitting the perfection and majesty of Allah. It is not likening Him to His creation, nor (seeking to) delve into their nature, nor outright denial or distortion of their meaning. The divisions or categories of *Tawheed* are established upon a comprehensive review of the texts, the Book and the *Sunnah*. That much is clear from the opening chapter of the Qur'ān to its last, both encompassing the divisions of *Tawheed* being threefold.⁷

Emphasis here is seen from the author seeking to reason that the tripartite division of *Tawheed* is based upon an inductive approach, *istiqrār*, gleaned from the texts of revelation. His son, 'Abd al-Razzaq ibn 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Badr argues in his work *al-Qawl al-Sadeed fi al-Radd 'ala min Ankar Taqseem al-Tawheed*:

The writer, Ḥasan ibn Ali al-Saqqāf said (on p.3): 'This is a concise and illuminating work through which I have argued for the invalidation of trinitarian categorisation of *Tawheed* into *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*.' I say, the matter of the Trinity is an abhorrent 'Aqeedah of the Christians in which they base their belief in three-gods – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Allah has declared them as *kuffār* in His revelation which is clearly established. Glory be unto the Almighty, he said: '*Those people who say that God is the third of three are defying [the truth]: there is only One God. If they persist in what they are saying, a painful punishment will afflict those of them who persist*,' [5: 73].

With regards to dividing *Tawheed* into three categories...or into two categories (namely), *Tawheed al-Ma'rifa wal-Ithbāt* and it is

⁷ 'Abd al-Muhsin ibn Ḥāmid al-Abbād al-Badr, *al-Intiṣār Ahl al-Sunnah wal' Hadīth fi Radd Abāṭeel Ḥasan al-Mālikī* [p. 181 (*Shamela* edition)]. Here for the translation, the latter portion of the quote as it appears in the Arabic edition has been omitted. The Professor doesn't provide a follow-on comment concerning this and it doesn't in round contain anything further illustrative to the arguments at hand. In the latter portion, al-Badr quotes the verses from *Surah al-Fātiḥa* and makes the assertion that the tripartite division of *Tawheed* is encapsulated therein.

Tawheed al-Rububiyyah and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*, and *Tawheed al-'Irādah wa Ṭalab*, and it is *Tawheed al-Uluhiyya*, this is the 'Aqeedah of all Muslims; the mu'mineen in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, except for the misguided innovators.⁸

Note the highlighted wording as outlined in the aforementioned quote. Notice how the emphasis is placed upon the Wahhābi tripartite division as being 'the *Aqeedah* of all Muslims,' except for those misguided and innovators!

Conclusions

In the round, the texts which have been quoted from in this chapter should provide sufficient clarity to outline the true nature of statements made by the adherents of Wahhābism. Hence, we would argue, and our reliance is totally upon Allah the Almighty, that the tripartite division of *Tawheed* as presented and clung to by the sect of Wahhābism is totally flawed; it is invalid. It is dangerously misleading, and on account of that, it is to be abandoned completely. Broadly its purported content does not accurately align with the meanings of the terms that are used within it, neither in the classical Arabic language in which the Qur'ān was revealed, nor in the legal terminology to which Islam has stipulated; this of course always taking precedence over linguistic custom. In relation to the notion of *al-Uluhiyyah*, divinity, it mandates the notion that god, *al-Ilāh* must be that which is worshipped, *al-Ma'būd*. Following this line of reasoning constitutes one of the statements of *kufr*, as will be outlined conclusively in this present volume.

It is misleading and false given that it doesn't accurately describe the reality of the *Shirk* which existed among the Arabs. Rather, it obstinately clings to the false notion that the Arabs, by and large, had no *Shirk* whatsoever in terms of *al-Rububiyyah*, lordship. That denial flatly contradicts well-established facts from the historical record, which are known from definitive,

⁸ 'Abd al-Razzaq ibn 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Badr, *al-Qawl al-Sadeed fi al-Radd 'ala min Ankar Taqseem al-Tawheed* [p. 16, (*Shamela* edition)]. The repetition of the tripartite division as mentioned in the opening sentence is omitted from the translation for ease of reading. After this, the remaining portion of the quote has been omitted also. Here, al-Badr merely reiterates what each part of the tripartite division relates to, a matter already extensively covered.

concurrent transmission. Worse still, clinging to this naturally leads to open opposition to the text of the Qur’ān, again, which is a matter of *kufr*.

The tripartite division is an inversion. It places the matter of *al-Rububiyyah* before that of *al-Uluhiyyah*, resultant from their claim that lordship entails divinity and not the other way around. Moreover, there is no clear consistent compartmentalisation of each of the divisions, with clear overlaps occurring. It is neither exclusive, nor is it exhaustive, and it seeks to include matters within the bounds of *Tawheed* other areas that do not specifically belong to it. One also can clearly discern that significant aspects of *Tawheed* are given no attention whatsoever within its rigid flawed boundaries. And finally, it has resulted in grievous harm and falsehoods. Most notably this has been done with the levelling *takfeer* against Muslims *en masse* followed by wielding the sword with unspeakable violence against them.

When the meaning of the terms – lord, ‘*Rabb*’ [رب], and god/deity, *Ilāh* [الله], are thoroughly analysed the fundamental flaws underpinning the tripartite division become readily evident. These terms are not wordings which sit outside of the corpus of the Arabic language, let alone the peak of its eloquence, the text of the Qur’ān, and they were utilised by the Arabs during the era of revelation.

3. The meaning of the Arabic word ‘*Rabb*’

In the Arabic language the word ‘*Rabb*,’ commonly translated in English as ‘Lord,’ encompasses two-primary meanings. The first, relates to ‘*al-Sayyid*,’ [السيد] namely ‘the Master;’ the one who manages, directs, commands and legislates. This is manifested in the following sub-divisions or categories, which are as follows:

- a) ‘*al-Sayyid al-Muṭā’ah*,’ the obeyed master. It is the most significant of the sub-divided meanings. Al-Jawhari said in *al-Šiḥāh*: ‘The Arabs say, I governed the people,’ meaning I was above them.¹
- b) ‘*al-Muṭaṣarraf wal’Mudabbir*,’ the one who manages, directs and oversees affairs and reforms conditions. The great Imam and *muḥaddith* Ahmad ibn Fāris said in *Mu’jam Maqāyass al-Lugha*, ‘*Rabb* (is) the one who reforms something, as in so-and-so managed his property; meaning he undertook its reformation.²
- c) ‘*al-Murabbi*,’ the nurturer.³ Al-Rāghib al-Īṣfahāni said in *Mufradāt Ghareeb al-Qur’ān*: ‘(sic. the word) *Rabb* originally signifies ‘nurturing,’ which is the development of something state by state until it reaches its completion. It is said: ‘he nurtured it, he raised it,’ and he is its guardian.⁴ Here I would point out, that if this is

¹ al-Jawhari, *al-Šiḥāh* [Vol. 1, p. 130].

² Ibn Fāris *Mu’jam Maqāyass al-Lugha* [Vol. 2, p. 381]

³ The closest equivalent English term for the Arabic word *al-Murabbī* is perhaps ‘the nurturer’ or ‘the caretaker.’ Within an academic context, it could also be translated or expressed as being ‘the educator’ or ‘the mentor.’

⁴ al-Rāghib al-Īṣfahāni, *Mufradāt Ghareeb al-Qur’ān*, [p. 184]

originally correct, it appears to be a secondary sub-meaning, and a specific case of the previous sub-meaning.

d) 'al-Malik' the king. Al-Azhari mentioned this in his *Tafsir* of the verse, 'Mention me to your master,' [12: 42] as is found in *Tahzeeb al-Lugha*.⁵ I find this interpretation peculiar and unconvincing. Rather, it here means 'the obeyed master,' nothing more. This obeyed master could likely be the King of Egypt at that time, as most exegetes assert; alternatively, it could be a prominent figure from the elite class. If Yusuf's original term had meant 'king,' Allah the Exalted would have rendered it in Arabic as such, especially since the term 'king' is frequently used in the Qur'ān and is specifically applied to the King of Egypt in this very *Surah*.

The second meaning is that of 'al-Mālik,' [الملك] the owner. In other words, to denote the possessor of an entity or property, holding ownership rights that grant the ability to use the entity by consuming it, such as eating bread or the meat of a slaughtered sheep, or enjoying its benefit, like riding a beast of burden. This also includes the rights to sell, gift, or lease the entity or its benefit as applicable. Thus, the owner, by virtue of ownership, possesses the rights of 'disposal,' 'management,' and 'care'; therefore, the owner is necessarily a managing director.

The interpretation made by al-Azhari of the term *Rabb* as meaning 'King' [الملك] is one of the defects to be found in the books of linguistics. Indeed, the esteemed Shaykh, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Yahya al-Mu'allimi noticed this, as documented in his collected works.

It has been reported from some of the *Salaf* that they interpreted the word *duā'* [دعاء] in some instances as being *Ibādah* – worship. This interpretation was almost universally adopted by later *mufassireen*, but this interpretation is debatable as it is not recognised in the Arabic language. This is why many linguists, including those who deal with figurative language, such as the author of *al-Qāmus*, the author of *al-Asās*, and that of *al-Misbāh*, didn't mention it. Even al-Rāghib, whose book focuses on the unique expressions of the Qur'ān, did not mention

⁵ al-Azhari *Tahzeeb al-Lugha*, [Vol. 15, p. 176]

it. Those who did mention it, like the author of *Lisān al'Arab*, did so only in the context of interpreting specific Qur'ānic words.

This is one of the most significant flaws in linguistic books: they adopt certain words that appear in the Qur'ān, interpret them based on the understanding of some of the *Salaf* or their own inferences from context, and then establish these interpretations as part of the language. The *Salaf* were lenient in their expressions, relying on the understanding of the listener. They might interpret a word by its implication, by something that falls under its general meaning, or by other contextual indications, as noted by meticulous scholars. This approach has led to a great deal of variance in their interpretations. As for what they inferred from context, they might have been mistaken. Therefore, it is inappropriate to assert that such interpretations represent the (language). When a reader of linguistic books encounters a definition like al-Hard: al-Manah' – 'Hard' means 'prevention'). They take it as a certain transmission, not realising that the author might have understood it from the context of the verse. This situation has its own implications.⁶

As a word, or term *al-Rabb* [الرب] it is more expressive and stronger in meaning than the terms *al-Sayyid* [السيد] and *al-Mālik* [الملك], although it is synonymous with them in most contexts. The 'Rabb' or 'Sayyid' necessarily implies being the one who commands and forbids; otherwise, he would not be a sovereign or a ruler. This is necessarily understood from the Arabic language and the *Deen* of Islam by way of its texts, as illustrated by Allah's words recounting where the Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him said to his fellow prisoners:

أَمَّا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيُسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا

(Fellow prisoners), one of you will serve his master with wine.⁷

Here meaning his 'Sayyid,' who has authority over him, or his owner, a sovereign. It is impossible and inconceivable that the intended meaning is his Creator or the one he worships, i.e., the one to whom ritual acts of worship

⁶ Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Yahya al-Mu'allimi *Jami' Shamila* [Vol. 3, p. 755]

⁷ Qur'ān, 12: 41

are directed. This same meaning is found in another verse, contrary to what al-Azhari claimed, in the same chapter where Yusuf says again:

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ يٰ ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ نَاجٌ مِنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ

*Joseph said to the one he knew would be saved, 'Mention me to your master.'*⁸

A third instance is covered in the following verse when the messenger came to him, Yusuf said:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ الرَّسُولُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مَا بِالنِّسْوَةِ الَّتِي قَلَعْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ

*'Go back to your master and ask him about what happened to those women who cut their hands.'*⁹

This meaning is also commonly understood in Arabic, as people say: 'Rabb al-Bayt,' (the master of the house) and 'Rabbat al-Bayt' (the mistress of the house). Again, this same meaning is intended in the statement of Allah regarding the rabbis and monks:

أَتَخْذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسِيَّحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ

*They take their rabbis and their monks as lords, as well as Christ, the son of Mary.*¹⁰

Meaning as masters who legislate and are obeyed, as we will elaborate shortly. It is known from historical transmission and current observation that ritual acts of worship are not directed towards them - the rabbis and monks. However, the Messiah, son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother, is considered by them to be different: a 'Rabb' and a fully divine 'god,' because he is believed to be either God or the son of God, or one as part of the Trinity, where God is three-into one and one-into three. Ritual acts of worship are directed towards him, and he is approached with religious observances, offerings/sacrifices and righteous deeds.

⁸ Qur'ān, 12: 42

⁹ Qur'ān, 12: 50

¹⁰ Qur'ān, 9: 31

Texts of the *Shari'ah* have prohibited a slave from calling his owner 'Rabbi' (my lord) or 'Rabbati' (my lady) and instead advises using 'Sayyidi' and 'Sayyidati.' It also instructs the owner to refrain from saying 'Abdi' or 'Amati,' replacing these terms with 'Fatā'i' [فتاتي] and 'Fatāti,' out of reverence for Allah, the Almighty. This ensures that the term *Rabb* is exclusively used for Allah, as seen in the vast majority of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, in nearly a thousand instances. The prohibition, which is more likely a matter of disapproval rather than outright prohibition, pertains to manners and legal rulings and is unrelated to issues of *al-'Imān*, *kufr*, *Tawheed* and *Shirk*. This principle is almost self-evident among Muslims, except for the extremist Wahhābis and those similarly afflicted with intellectual paralysis. Imām Abu Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Farāḥ al-Qurtubī mocks one of the ignorant Christians, saying:

As for his statement: 'And His governance in His Lordship,' the apparent meaning of *al-Tadbeer* (governance) from the previous statement suggests it refers to mental reflection and intellectual deliberation; and the Almighty is far above *al-Tadbeer* that involves reflection and deliberation, as this can only be conceived concerning someone who is ignorant of something and wishes to use his thought to acquire knowledge of it; and ignorance of Allah is impossible, so governance in the sense of thought is impossible for Him. If the questioner meant something else by his statement, he must clarify and provide evidence. As for the term *al-Rububiyyah* - Lordship, it is a term derived from *Rabb*; and in the common usage of the Arabs, it has two meanings: one is 'master,' [السيد] and the other is 'owner,' [الملك].

If he meant the first meaning, which pertains to leadership and honour, it is incorrect, because His leadership is obligatory for Him and does not require any cause through governance or contemplation. The implication of his statement is that He governed His Lordship and created it through His governance, which is manifest ignorance and explicit *kufr*. If he meant the second meaning, which pertains to ownership, it is also not correct in the apparent sense of his statement; it would mean that He governed His ownership and created it through governance, which involves reflection and contemplation, and the Creator, the Almighty, is exalted above such notions. When this questioner finished his eloquent and brilliantly composed speech, it

became evident that he was devoid of knowledge, incapable of understanding meanings, and inept at writing words; he began the method of argumentation and how to reason, as if he were al-Ṭusi in his statements and al-Barawi in his debate manners. *Wa-la-'amr Allah* [وَلَعَمْرَ اللَّهِ], if this questioner had been rational, he would have concealed his flaws and not exposed him.¹¹

In summary, the term 'Rabb' [الربّ] in the common usage of the Arabs has two meanings: *al-Sayyid* – master [السيد], and secondly, *al-Mālik* – owner [الملك]. This is agreed upon by linguists. However, the esteemed scholar and *hadith* expert Aḥmad Ibn Fāris deviated from this *ijmā'*, in his book which is entitled *Mu'jam Maqāyis al-Lughā*, where he said: 'The root letters *ba'* [باء] and *ra'* [راء], indicate two fundamental meanings: the first is the improvement of something and overseeing it; hence, *Rabb* means 'owner,' 'creator,' and 'companion.'¹² The inclusion of 'creator,' [الخالق] is not universally accepted and deviates from the *ijmā'* of linguistic scholars. Additionally, Ibn Fāris did not mention 'master' at all. The mention of 'companion' [الصاحب] is ambiguous since the word often refers to a person's friends or travel companion, which is unrelated to our subject. It could also mean 'owner,' as in 'the owner of the horse,' which has already been clearly mentioned under the term 'owner,' making it unnecessary to complicate the meaning with an ambiguous, multi-faceted term. It might also mean 'the doer of an action,' such as in the phrase 'companions of the garden,' meaning its inhabitants, or 'one described with a characteristic,' such as 'His Majesty,' meaning 'one described with majesty.' Perhaps Ibn Fāris interpreted the phrase - 'Your Lord, the Lord of Glory, is far above what they attribute to Him,'¹³ to mean 'the possessor of glory,' thus inferring that *Rabb* means 'companion.' However, it is more likely that it is an abbreviation for 'the Lord, described with glory,' as the context supports. Ibn Fāris' approach here is similar to that

¹¹ al-Qurtubi *al-I'lām bimā fi Deen al-Naṣṣara min al-Fasad wal-Awhām*, *wa-Izhār Mahāsin al-Islam* [Vol. 1, pp. 53/54]. The phrase *Wa-la-'amr Allah* [وَلَعَمْرَ اللَّهِ] is an old Arabic expression that can be translated to 'By the life of God' or 'By God's life.' It is an expression like an oath or to swear by, e.g. 'by God,' or 'I swear by God,' which is used in English. Broadly it signifies the speaker's strong emphasis or conviction about the statement they are making. The phrase invokes the sanctity and solemnity of Allah as a witness to the truth or seriousness of what the speaker seeks to say.

¹² Ibn Fāris *Mu'jam Maqāyis al-Lughā* [Vol. 2, p. 381]

¹³ *Qur'ān*, 37: 180

of al-Azhari, who interpreted *Rabb* as meaning 'king,' and we have previously explained that this is one of the significant flaws found in linguistic books. Indeed, Ibn Taymiyyah was correct in including *al-Tadbeer* and *al-Tasarruf* under the category of *al-Rububiyyah* because these concepts as they relate to administration and management are subsets of the concepts of 'sovereignty' and 'ownership,' and necessarily part of them, as we discussed above in relation to the concept of 'Rabb.' However, the concepts of creation, manufacture, invention, and innovation are distinct, by necessity of sensory perception, language, and reason, from the concepts of ownership and sovereignty. For instance, a contractor who builds a turnkey house is the 'maker' or 'builder' of the house, but he is neither its owner nor its master; you are the owner and master of the house, though you did not make anything of it. Similarly, your Toyota Corona car is yours, and you are its owner and master, while its makers are a team of workers in Japan. If you were a skilled carpenter and made a chair for yourself out of wood, you would be the owner and master of the chair, not by purchasing it from someone else, but by virtue of being its maker. This distinction was noted by the martyred Imām Sayyid Qutb, may Allah be pleased with him, when he stated:

Abraham, on the other hand, enjoys a state of complete certainty. He knows his Lord. His thoughts are full of the truth of His Oneness. Hence, he says with absolute clarity: *'Your true Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He who created them, and I am a witness to this,'* [21: 56]. He is one Lord, the Lord of the people and the Lord of the heavens and the earth. His Lordship arises from His being the Creator. These are inseparable attributes.¹⁴

Therefore, the concept of 'maker,' and similarly 'creator,' 'innovator,' and 'originator,' is distinct from the concepts of 'master' or 'owner.' There is no justification for conflating 'creatorship' with 'lordship,' as Imām Ibn Taymiyyah erroneously did, driven by his fervent desire to refute the theologians' claim that 'creatorship' is the most specific attribute of 'divinity.'

¹⁴ Sayyid Qutb *Fi Dhilāl al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 5, p. 160 (Shamela edition)]. Reference to the English translation, though markedly different in parts is: Sayyid Qutb *In the Shade of the Qur'ān* [Vol. 12, pp. 41/42].

He was followed in this by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW) and his Wahhābi sect, who followed their leader and totem blindly.

These are linguistic and rational axioms, yet the Wahhābi sect has failed to grasp them. This is unsurprising, as their members are described as reciting the Qur’ān, yet it doesn’t go beyond their throats. Their worship and striving is to impress people, yet they themselves are impressed by it. That reaches the extent where if one compares his prayer to theirs, or even their fasting, they would think it somehow deficient. One of them declared: ‘*Ilm al-Kalām* is ignorance, and ignorance of *Ilm al-Kalām* is knowledge.’ Another stated: ‘Whoever engages in logic has committed heresy,’ seeking refuge with Allah from such a notion. The inevitable consequence of their rejection of contemplation and thought, coupled with their self-admiration and self-righteousness, is that they ‘*call to the Book of Allah, but they have nothing to do with it,*’ and ‘*they pass through the Deen like an arrow passes through its prey.*’ They ‘*kill the people of Islam and leave the idol worshipers,*’ as we observe these days with the criminal and bloody gang that calls itself ‘ISIS.’ Thus, the compassionate advisor, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: ‘*Wherever you find them, eliminate them; for in that, there is a reward with Allah on the Day of Resurrection.*’¹⁵

4. The linguistic origin of the Arabic word ‘*Ilah*’

The term ‘*Ilah*’ [الله] is written as such in the Qur’ānic script and in the declaration of faith - *Lā Ilāha Illā Allah*, although it is pronounced as ‘*Ilah*,’ [اَللّٰه]. It is akin to “*Ill*” in Arabic and similar terms in other Semitic languages, such as Aramaic and Syriac. Examples include the term ‘*El*’ found in names like Israel, Israfel, Mikael, Gabriel, Azrael, Emmanuel, Azazel, among others.

In Hebrew, it appears as ‘*Eloah*,’ or ‘*Eloh*, and in the plural form as ‘*Elohim*.’ This plural form can denote either multiple gods or a plural of majesty, which is common in the texts of the Old Testament. It appears that the ancient Hebrews were flexible with the meaning, sometimes using ‘*Eloah*’ and ‘*Elohim*’ to refer to a sovereign master or a respected lord with high status, in addition to their primary use for divine beings, i.e., supernatural entities. An example of this is the description of Moses as ‘*Elohim*’ to Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus (7:1), and similarly for Aaron in the Book of Exodus. (4:16). This is explicitly stated in the original Hebrew text, and the famous translation is quite close: ‘The LORD said to Moses - See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your Prophet.’¹ Also, ‘He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him.’² Similar usage can be found in other passages.

The term ‘*Allah*’ in Arabic and Aramaic is most likely derived from ‘*al-Ilāh*,’ [الله] with the addition of the definite article ‘*al*.’ Over time, this term has been so widely used that it has become a seemingly non-derived, original term. It has come to signify the Sacred, Majestic, and Exalted divine being,

¹⁵ As the reader should be familiar by now, these are taken from the Prophetic statements which describe the *Khawārij*.

¹ Old Testament, Book of Exodus, [7: 1]

² Ibid, 4: 16

the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of revelation and the Prophets among the Israelites, and the God of revelation and the Prophets outside of the Israelites. His essence is Sanctified, and His names are Blessed.

The transformation likely occurred as follows: the original term was ‘*Ilah*,’ [إِلَهٌ]. Then, the definite article ‘al’ was added, forming ‘*al-Ilalha*,’ [الْإِلَهَةِ]. For ease of pronunciation, the *hamza* (the glottal stop) in ‘*al-Ilah*’ [الْإِلَهٌ] was omitted, resulting in ‘*al-Lah*,’ [الْإِلَهٌ]. Further simplification involved merging the two L’s (known as *idgham kabir*), leading to ‘*Allah*,’ where the initial *L* became part of the root. Eventually, the long vowel ‘a’ after the merger was deemed too heavy and was shortened, producing the term ‘*Allah*,’ Exalted be His majesty and elevated be His status. The following has been mentioned in the *Tafsir* of al-Tabari:

It is possible [linguistically], just as the root of His statement: *‘But, for me, He is God, my Lord,’* [18: 38] is “But I, He is God, my Lord.” Likewise the poet said:

*You strike me with a glance, [saying] that you will wrong me
And hate me; but [know] that you, you I hate not.*

The intended meaning of the second hemistich is 'But I, you I hate not.' In both cases the *hamza* of *anā* (I) is dropped and the *nun* of *lākin* (but) is contracted with the *nun* of *anā* (I), and this results in the *shadda* on the *nun* of *lākinna*. Likewise with [the Name] *Allah*: its root is *al-Ilāh*. After its initial *hamza* is dropped, the *lām*, which is part of the trilateral root of *ilāh* is contracted with the *lām* of the definite article *al-* (which originally had a *sukun* on it) and the result is a single *lām* with a *shadda* above it, just like we have described previously concerning Allah's statement, 'But, for me, He is God, my Lord.'¹³

Despite the clarity and obviousness of this, there are other conflicting and contradictory opinions, including, that which has been cited by al-Qurṭubi in *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Our'ān*:

³ *Tafsir al-Tabari* [Vol. 1, p. 83 (print edition, Arabic)]. English: *Selections from the Comprehensive Exposition of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur'an*: Volume I, al-Tabari, Translated by Professor Scott Lucas [The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge, 2017, p. 101]. In the Arabic version the Professor quotes that latter half first, then highlights the former quote from al-Tabari. This would be too confusing to present in this manner for the translation, so we have opted to provide the quote in full, particularly for ease of reading.

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There is a disagreement regarding this name [Allah]: is it derived, or is it a proper noun denoting the essence? Many scholars have supported the first view. They differ on its derivation and origin; Sibawayh narrated from al-Khalil that its origin is 'Ilāh' [إله] like *Fiāl*, and the *alif* and *lām* were added instead of the *hamzah*. Sibawayh said: 'Like *al-Nās*, whose original form is *anās*.' It was also said that the original word is 'Lah,' [لاه] and the *alif* and *lām* were added for grandeur, which is the choice of Sibawayh. He cited:

Lah ibn 'Ammi, (by God, son of your uncle) you have not surpassed in nobility ... over me, nor are you my protector to disgrace me.

This is the narration: ‘*fatakhzuni*’ [فتخروني] with the *kha’ mu’jamah* (dotted), meaning - you control me. al-Kisāī and al-Farrā’ said: ‘The meaning of *Bismillah* is *Bismi Ilāh* [بسم الله]; they dropped the *hamzah* and merged the first *lām* into the second, thus they became a single stressed *lām*.⁴

Here I would argue that the choice of al-Khalil is the correct one, which is that the origin is ‘*Ilah*,’ [ءِلَّا]; the *alif* and *lām* were added instead of the *hamzah* as explained earlier. As for the choice of Sibawayh, it is not convincing and does not give the first *hamzah* in ‘*Il*,’ [إِل] or ‘*Iluh*,’ [إِلُوه] or similar words, its due right, as it is consistent in all Semitic languages. The correctness of al-Khalil’s choice is supported by what is mentioned in *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* by Ibn Sīdah al-Andalusi:

(Allah) The origin in your saying Allah is *al-Ilāh* [اَللّٰهُ], the *hamzah* was omitted, and the *alif* and *lām* became a necessary substitute, thus the name became as if it were a proper noun. This is the view of Sibawayh and the adept grammarians.

It was said about the name (Allah) that it is a proper noun whose origin is not *al-Ilāh*, as we explained first, and this is incorrect for two reasons: one is that every proper noun must have an origin from which it was transferred or changed; the other is that all the names of Allah are attributes, except (a thing), which is confirmed for Him because it

⁴ al-Qurtubi in *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 1, p. 82 (print edition)]. The poetic verse [لَا اُخْرَى مِنْ اَنْ عَمَّكَ لَا اَفْضَلْتَ فِي حَسْبٍ ... عَنِي وَلَا اُنْتَ دِيَانِي فَخَرَجْتُ وَنَبَّى] expresses pride in lineage and dignity. 'Lah,' [لَا] being used as an abbreviation of [الله], God. So the poetic line expresses his pride in himself and his lineage, affirming that no one can surpass him or control him.

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is the most general in generality; it is not permissible for Him to have a name by way of a nickname, and the proper nouns were run by the people of the language in this way, so they named with Dog, Monkey, Māzin, and Oppressor because they took it in the way of a nickname, not a description.⁵

Returning again to al-Qurtubi, he wrote in *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*:

Some claimed that the origin of the term 'Allah' lies in the *ha* which is the pronoun for the absent, implying that they acknowledged His existence in the innate nature of their minds, thus referring to Him with the pronoun for the absent. Subsequently, they added the '*lām*' of possession since they knew He is the Creator and Owner of all things, thus it became '*lah*', [ال]. Then, the '*alif*' and '*lām*' were added for magnification and glorification, making it 'Allah.'⁶

I would argue it is more likely that this is a flight of fancy, akin to the mystic ramblings of Sufi philosophers. It may also be related to what is mentioned in the Old Testament, in the well-known translation:

Then Moses said to God, 'When I come to the Israelites and say to them, The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, What is His name? What shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.'⁷

It is apparent from this that the original Hebrew text, which is: 'Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh,' when correctly pronounced, perplexed the translators: thus they said here in the well-known translation: 'I AM WHO I AM,' meaning: I am the

⁵ Ibn Sīdah *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* [Vol. 7, p. 747 (print edition, 2006)]. Here the quotation from Ibn Sīdah has been abbreviated to its relevant parts pertinent to the chapter. The quote is further mentioned in subsequent chapters too.

⁶ Op Cit. [Vol. 1, p. 83]

⁷ Book of Exodus, [3: 13/15]

Eternal Being. Here is an alternative translation of the entire text that avoids translating problematic words and phrases:

Then Moses said to God, 'Here I come to the Israelites and say to them - The God of your ancestors has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is His name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses: Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites: 'Ehyeh' has sent me to you. God also said to Moses: 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites: ('YHWH), the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

Note that 'YHWH' is not vocalized because it is, most likely, truly four letters that should be pronounced as individual letters: Yod, He, Waw, He. In Hebrew [יהוה], but Jews refrain from pronouncing it, instead saying: 'Adonai' = 'the Lord, my Lord,' during prayer or religious lessons, or pronouncing (Hashem) (= the Name) in other contexts; it was a 'secret' that only the High Priest was allowed to pronounce once a year in the Temple of Jerusalem. After the destruction of the Temple and the extinction of the priesthood, the pronunciation became unknown. Here are alternative translations of the significant phrase 'Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh' - in the Jesuit Fathers' translation, it is rendered as: 'I am who I am.' The common Arabic translation states: 'I am who is;' however, the closest to the original Hebrew linguistic form is: [(I) will be who (I) will be], in the first-person form. Alternatively, in the third-person form: [(He) will be who (He) will be]. In the expression of the mystic philosophers: 'He who is,' or succinctly: 'He is He.' This indicates that the most specific attribute of God is being, or existence, i.e., the one who has existed from the ancient past, who exists in the present, and who will exist in the future forevermore. This understanding was known to some Muslim scholars of old, as mentioned in the margin of *Lisān al-'Arab* by Ibn Manzūr:

His statement: 'And their saying: *Haya Shar Haya*, means 'O Living, O Sustainer' in Hebrew; similarly in *al-Tahdhib*; and in *al-Takmilah*, Ṣāghānī said: 'This is incorrect, and this phrase is not derived from this root, I mean the root *Sharh*, and some say *Ahya Sharhyā* like *Ahya*, all of which are distortions.' Rather, it is 'Ehyeh' with a *kasrah* on the *hamzah* and *sukoon* on the *ha*, and 'Asher' with a *fathah* on the *alif* and

sukoon on the *ra*, followed by 'Ehyeh,' the same as the first; and it is a name of God, glorified be His mention, meaning 'the Eternal who has always been,' as a Jewish rabbi from Aden, Abyan, read it to me.⁸

In any case, if what came about Allah in the Old Testament is correct and free from alteration and distortion - and although it has not been preserved from omission and truncation, as attested by the Qur'an, reason, and history, which strongly suggest this - it is a definitive argument that the ancient Hebrews *did not have a proper noun* for God, Exalted is He. Hence, Allah coined this name 'YHWH' for them. This is further confirmed by the text of the Torah (the Old Testament), where it is stated in Exodus:

God spoke to Moses and said to him: 'I am YHWH. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as (El Shaddai), but by my name (YHWH) I was not known to them.'⁹

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, 'YHWH' appeared to Abraham and said to him: 'I am (El Shaddai); walk before me and be blameless!'¹⁰

In Arabic 'El Shaddai' means - the Almighty God. All of this becomes irrelevant after Allah, Glorified and Exalted be His name, chose for His sacred self the term 'Allah' in the Arabic language. This term is also found in Western Aramaic, known as Syriac, which was the common language during the time of Jesus son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother. Thus, Allah, Glorified and Exalted be His name, Himself translated the correct meaning of the phrase 'Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh' into Arabic in His address to Moses:

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُنِي وَاقْمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

*I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me and keep up the prayer so that you remember Me.*¹¹

⁸ *Lisān al-'Arab* [Vol. 13, p. 506]

⁹ Book of Exodus, [6: 2/3]

¹⁰ Book of Genesis, [17: 1]

¹¹ *Qur'ān*, 20: 14

In his *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* writes:

The second opinion, endorsed by a group of scholars including al-Shāfi'i, Abu al-Ma'āli, al-Khaṭṭābi, al-Ghazāli, al-Mufaddal, and others, and narrated from al-Khalil and Sibawayh, holds that the definite article 'al' is integral to the structure of this name and cannot be omitted. Al-Khaṭṭābi argued that the evidence for the definite article being intrinsic to the name and not merely for definition is the use of the vocative particle with it, as in 'Ya Allah.' The vocative particle does not coexist with the definite article for definition, as one does not say 'Ya al-Rahman,' or 'Ya al-Raheem,' but rather *Ya Allah* indicating that the 'al' is part of the name's structure. And Allah knows best.¹²

I would argue that this 'second opinion,' which denies derivation, is likely incorrect. The argument of al-Khaṭṭābi holds no substantial meaning because the definite article being intrinsic to the term 'Allah,' making it inseparable now, does not preclude the possibility that in the ancient linguistic origin, some letters were dropped, and others assimilated, making it appear as if it were a non-derived term, as we have clarified above.

In Arabic, there is a verb 'yatallah' [يَتَلَّهُ], which means to venerate the sacred rites or to worship, and it follows the same morphological pattern. The word is found in the corpus of *ahādīth*, for example as cited in the *Seerah* of Ibn Hishām with an *isnād* that is *Sahīh* and connected throughout its channel:

قَالَ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ بْنُ شَهَابٍ الزَّهْرِيِّ عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزَّبِيرِ عَنْ مُسْوَرِ بْنِ مَحْرَمَةَ وَمَرْوَانَ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ أَنَّهُمَا حَدَّثَاهُ قَالَا: حَرَّجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَمَ الْحُدُبَيْبَةَ يُرِيدُ زِيَارَةَ الْبَيْتِ لَا يُرِيدُ قِتَالًا؛ (فَسَاقَ خَبْرَ الْحُدُبَيْبَةِ الطَّوِيلَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ ثُمَّ بَعْثَوْا إِلَيْهِ الْحَلَيْسَ بْنَ عَلْقَمَةَ أَوْ أَنَّ رَبَّانَ وَكَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ سَيِّدَ الْأَخْبَيْشِ، وَهُوَ أَخْدُونِي الْحَارِثُ بْنُ عَبْدِ نَعَّا بْنِ كَنَانَةَ؛ فَلَمَّا رَأَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ يَتَلَّهُونَ فَابْعَثُو الْهَذِي فِي وَجْهِهِ حَتَّى يَرَاهُ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْهَذِي بَسَّيلَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ عُرْضِ الْوَادِي فِي قَلَابِدِهِ وَقَدْ أَكَلَ أُوبَارَةً مِنْ طُولِ الْحَبْسِ عَنْ مَحْلِهِ رَجَعَ إِلَى قُرْبَيْشِ، وَلَمْ يَصِلْ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، إِعْظَامًا لَمَا رَأَى؛ ... إِلَخَ

Ibn Ishāq said - Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihab al-Zuhri narrated to me from 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr from Miswar ibn Makhrām and Marwan ibn al-Hakam, that they both narrated to him and they said:

¹² al-Qurtubi *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 1, p. 82 (print edition)].

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him departed in the year of al-Ḥudaybiyyah intending to visit the House, not intending to fight (the narrator then relayed the lengthy account relating to al-Ḥudaybiyyah until he reached the point where) the Quraysh sent to him al-Ḥulays ibn Alqamah (or Ibn Zabbān), who at that time was the leader of al-Āḥābīsh. He was from the tribe of Bani al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Abd Manāf ibn Kinānah. When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saw him, he said: *This man is from a people who show reverence to the sacred (rites), so send forth the sacrificial animals before him so he may see them.* When al-Ḥulays saw the sacrificial animals coming toward him, flowing into the valley, adorned with garlands, and their fur worn out from their long detainment away from their intended destination, he returned to Quraysh without even meeting the Messenger of Allah, out of reverence for what he had seen.¹³

It appears that 'yatallah' [يَتَّلَّهُ] is derived from the following trilateral root of *hamza, lām* and *ha* [ءَ لَ حَ]. Again in the *Tafsir* of al-Qurtubi there is:

al-Ḍaḥḥāk said: It was named 'Allah' because the creation 'yatā'alahun' [يَتَّلَّهُنَّ] towards Him towards Him for their needs and supplicate to Him in their hardships.' al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad mentioned: 'because the creation 'ya'lāhun' [يَأْلَهُنَّ] towards Him (with a *fathah* on the *lām*) and 'ya'līhoun' [يَأْلَهُونَ] (with a *kasrah* on the *lām*) are both dialects.

It is said to be derived from 'Aliha' [إِلَيْهِ] meaning 'to worship,' and 'ta'āllaha' [تَّالَّهَ] meaning 'to devote oneself in worship.' Thus, in the

¹³ *Seerah* Ibn Hisham [Vol. 2, p. 308]. al-Ṭabari also records the account of this in his *History* [Vol. 8, pp. 68/71 (English)]. Further references to the tradition are as cited in the *Musnad* of Ahmad [Vol. 31, no. 18910], narrated with the complete channel and text; in the *Tafsir* of al-Baghawi [Vol. 7, pp. 316, 347] as well as many others across the books of history, *seerah* and *Tafsir*. Also recorded in the *Mu'jam Ibn al-'Arābi* [Vol. 2, pp. 74/75 (print edition)] there is the following narration with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: Ibn 'Aāmir narrated to us Ibn al-Āṣbahāni narrated to us Sufyan ibn Uyayna narrated to us from 'Amr or Ibn Abi Mulayka from Ibn al-Zubayr and Ubaydallah ibn Abi Yazeed from Ibn 'Abbās, they said: 'Ukaz and Majanah were markets during the period of *Jāhiliyya*, and people used to *yatāllahuna* (worship) towards Manāt. Thus the verse was revealed: *But it is no offence to seek some bounty from your Lord,* [2: 198].

verse: 'and forsake you and your gods,' [7: 127]. Based on this reading, Ibn 'Abbās and others said: 'and your worship.'¹⁴

Further to this, the following has been cited in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari:

Abu Ja'far said: As for the interpretation of Allah's statement (Exalted is He) *Allah*, it has the meaning in accordance with that which was narrated to us from Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās: 'He is the One whom everything serves and which every creature worships.' And that to which Abu Kārib narrated to us, he said Uthmān ibn Sa'eed narrated to us he said Bishr ibn Umārah narrated to us he said Abu Rawq narrated to us from al-Ḍaḥḥāk from Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, he said: 'Allah is the Possessor of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *al-Ubudiyyah* (the quality of being worshipped) above all of His creation.' Thus, if someone says to us: does (the Name Allah) have a trilateral verbal root (*fa'ala/yaf'alu*) upon which this proper Name is based? It is said (in reply): There is no indication that this (verb) has been heard (used) within the Arabic language, but by *istidlāl* (inference) it has one.

If it is said - what indicates that *al-Uluhiyyah* is *al-Ibadāh* and that *al-Ilāh* is the one is worshipped? And that (the Name Allah) has a trilateral verbal root? (In reply) it is said, there is no disagreement among Arabic speakers over the soundness of describing a person's intense worship and quest for that which is with Allah, Exalted in His Remembrance, with the words - 'So and so *ta'allaḥa*.' An example of that is Ru'ba ibn al-Ḥajjāj (provided in *Rajaz* style):

'The abundance of chaste beauties comes from Allah
Who glorify Him and say,
To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return
On account of my intense piety.'

By *ta'alluhi*, the poet means 'my acts of worship and my quest for Allah in my deeds.' There is no doubt that *ta'alluhi* is the [Form V] verbal noun from the verb *alaha/ya'lahu* and that the meaning of *alaha*, were one to employ it would be 'to worship Allah.' The survival of the verbal noun (of *alaha*) is evidence that the Arabs used to employ the

¹⁴ al-Qurtubi *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 1, p. 83 (print edition)].

[Form I] verb of this root without any additional prefixes or suffixes
And that is what has been narrated to us as per:

Sufyān ibn Waki narrated to us he said Waki' narrated to us he said my father narrated to us from Nāfi' from Ibn Umar from 'Amr ibn Dinār from Ibn 'Abbās that he read *Wa yadhraka wa Ilāhataka* (*forsake you and your gods*);¹⁵ he said: 'Ibadātaka - Worshipping you.' He says: '(The Pharaoh) was worshipped but did not worship (any other).'

Sufyān narrated to us he said Ibn ‘Uyayna narrated to us from ‘Amr ibn Dinār from Muhammad ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Ḥasan from Ibn ‘Abbās (regarding the verse) *Wa yadhraka wa Ilāhataka (forsake you and your gods)*; he said: ‘Pharaoh was only worshipped and did not worship (any other).’

(Abu Ja'far al-Tabari) That is how Ibn‘Abbās and Mujāhid read this verse [as being *Ilāhataka* as opposed to the orthodox reading of *ālihataka*]. Al-Qāsim narrated to us he said al-Ḥussein ibn Dāwud narrated to us he said al-Hajjāj reported to me from Mujāhid concerning where He says - *Wa yadhraka wa Ilāhataka (forsake you and your gods)*; he said: 'And worshipping you.'¹⁶

From the perspective of its lexical origin and its relation to similar terms in other Semitic languages, and considering the linguistic inquiries involved, the term *Ilāh* [אֱלֹהִים] holds minimal practical value. This is in stark contrast to the term *Rabb* [رب], due to the inconsistencies and contradictions in the linguistic investigations which fail to elucidate the meanings that would have been

¹⁵ The reference here is to the verse at [7: 127], which in full reads as: ‘*The leaders among Pharaoh’s people said to him, ‘But are you going to leave Moses and his people to spread corruption in the land and forsake you and your gods?’ He replied, ‘We shall kill their male children, sparing only the females: We have complete power over them.’*’ Here Professor Lucas (see next footnote for reference) has a footnote in his translation [p. 100] which reads: ‘The orthodox reading of this verse in the Qur’ān is *ālihataka*, instead of Ibn ‘Abbās’ *Ilāhataka*. The significance of this difference is that the reading of Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid is a verbal noun, which implies the existence of a verb based on the trilateral root *-l-h*. The orthodox reading of *ālihataka* is not a verbal noun and thus does not support Tabari’s argument that the Name *Allāh* is based on the trilateral root *‘-l-h’*’.

¹⁶ *Tafsir al-Tabari* [Vol. 1, pp. 82/83 (print edition, Arabic)]. For the translated section we have utilised, albeit with some modification, the translation by Professor Scott Lucas from: *Selections from the Comprehensive Exposition of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur'an: Volume I*, al-Tabari. Translated by Scott Lucas [The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge, 2017, pp. 99/100].

evoked in the minds of the eloquent Arabs during the time of the Qur’ān’s revelation when they uttered or heard this term *Ilāh* [اَللّٰه]. To illustrate the limited utility of these linguistic inquiries, consider the following examples, which highlight their often fruitless and misguided nature. The first of which is found in the *Tafsir* of al-Ourtubi:

It has been said that it is derived from 'Walah,' [وله] meaning bewilderment, and *al-Walah* [الوله] signifies the loss of reason. It is said - a man is *wālih* [واله] and a woman is *wālihah* [والهه] and *wālih* [وله]. *Muwallih* [موله] is water that has spread in the deserts. Hence, Allah, the Exalted, causes intellects to be bewildered and minds to be perplexed in understanding the realities of His attributes and contemplating His essence. According to this interpretation, the root of *Ilāh* [إله] is *walah* [وله] and the *hamzah* is substituted from a *waw* as it is substituted in *ishāh* [إشاح] and *wishāh* [وشاح], *isādah* [إسادة] and *wisādah* [وسادة]; and this was narrated from al-Khalil. It is said that it is derived from elevation; the Arabs used to say for everything elevated - *lahāh* [لاهه], so they would say when the sun rose: *lahat* [لاهت].¹⁷

Ibn Manzur mentioned in *Lisān al-‘Arab*

Alaha, al-Ilahha, Allah, [الله: الله - عز وجل: إله], the Mighty and Sublime and anything taken as a deity besides Him is *ilah* [إله], according to the one who takes it as such, and the plural is *alihah* [اللهة]. The *Aṣnām* (idols) are named that, *alihah* because they believed that worship was due to them.¹⁸

These examples illustrate the confusion and lack of consensus in the linguistic interpretations of the term, demonstrating that such inquiries often yield little benefit in understanding the term's significance and application in the context of the Qur'ānic revelation.

¹⁷ al-Qurtubi *al-Jāmi' li-Ahkām al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 1, pp. 82/83 (print edition)].

¹⁸ *Lisān al-‘Arab* [Vol. 1, p. 196]

5. The Qur'anic depiction of a deity

Clarifying the Qur'anic meaning of the word – *Ilāh* (god/deity) is critically important at this juncture. In relation to the meaning or meanings that arose in the minds of the Arabs during the epoch of revelation, a people eloquent and well-versed in the Arabic language, when they heard or pronounced the word ‘*Ilāh*,’ this is the central meaning outlined within the legal texts. For point of reference and to reiterate, the legal texts themselves are the book of Allah, the Qur'an, together with the authentic Prophetic *Sunnah*. What is the specific meaning? The critical matter has been eloquently outlined by the mercy of Allah, clarified within the text of the Holy Qur'an in many places. These include the following, where He Blessed be His Names said:

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُمْ إِنَّ أَخْذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهُ يَأْتِيُكُمْ بِهِ

Say [Prophet], ‘Think: if Allah were to take away your hearing and your sight and seal up your hearts, what god other than Allah could restore them?’¹

Given this, an *Ilāh* is that entity or being which is capable of bestowing hearing and sight by way of its intrinsic power. That is done so independently, regardless of whether the *Ilāh* is worshipped or not; meaning, independent of any of the specific acts which are undertaken by ‘worshippers.’ Moreover, it exists within the power of *Ilāh* whether they exist (the worshippers) or not.

مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهُ يَأْتِيُكُمْ بِضَيَاءٍ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ

¹ Qur'an, 6: 46

What god other than Allah could bring you light? Do you not listen?²

The *Ilāh* deity is the entity or being which is capable of bringing forth light by way of its own intrinsic power, independently, regardless of whether it is worshipped or not. The following verses continue, stating that the *Ilāh* is the entity or being that brings about day and night, by way of its own intrinsic power; again, independently, and regardless of whether it is worshipped or not. Going further, this is regardless of human act, quite apart even from whether humanity exists altogether in the first place.

The *Ilāh* is *al-Sayyid* – the master, possessing complete sovereignty. He is *al-Rabb*, the Lord who is obeyed with absolute obedience; in other words, meaning that He retains the exclusive prerogative of command. Threatening Moses, the Pharaoh said:

فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتُمْ إِنَّ أَخْذَ اللَّهُ عَيْرِي لَأَجْعَلَنِكُمْ مِنَ الْمُسْجُونِينَ

‘If you take any god other than me, I will throw you into prison.³

This is according to the correction interpretation, but there are however other conflicting viewpoints in this respect. From the next two-verses we can discern that the *Ilāh* is the entity or being retaining complete and utter invincibility. That entity or being cannot be harmed and grants protection to others in an absolute, unconditional manner; its protection cannot be violated, nor can its pledge broken. It intercedes without needing permission, and its intercession is never rejected, whether it is worshipped or not, again irrespective of human agency or even existence.

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَهٌ تَعْنَى هُمْ مِنْ دُونِنَا لَا يَسْتَطِعُونَ نَصْرًا أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ مِنَ يُصْحِبُونَ

Do they have gods who can defend them against Us? Their ‘gods’ have no power to help themselves, nor can they be protected from Us.⁴

أَتَخِدُ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهٌ إِنْ يُرْدِنَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِضُرٍّ لَا تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَنْقُذُونَ

² Qur'an, 28: 71

³ Qur'an, 26: 29

⁴ Qur'an, 21: 43

How could I take besides Him any other gods, whose intercession will not help me and who would not be able to save me if the Lord of Mercy wished to harm me?⁵

Next, the *Ilāh* is the entity or being with the ability to bring the dead to life. This covers too the matter of resurrecting the dead to preside in judgment over them, by way of intrinsic power, independently, whether it is worshipped or not, irrespective of human agency or even existence. He the Exalted says:

أَمْ أَخْدُوا إِلَهًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

Have they chosen any gods from the earth who can give life to the dead?⁶

Taking all these points together, there are many occasions within the Holy Qur'ān within similar contexts, where these specific attributes and acts are mentioned. These acts and attributes together provide the qualification to one who possesses them and performs them to be called *al-Ilāh* – god, deity. Given that it is therefore entirely reasonable to conceive of human action seeking from that *Ilāh* forgiveness, pardon, and mercy. Or to seek mediation and intercession; to call for aid, refuge, and support. It can also include the request for aid, benefits and protection from harm; or to dedicate rituals and acts of worship to them; or to direct words and actions to them that express heartfelt states and emotional responses, such as sanctification, glorification, and reverence; humility, submission, and surrender; love, affection, and a sense of closeness and solace; hope, aspiration, and desire; trust and reliance; fear, dread, and awe.

All of that stems from their being an *Ilāh*. In other words, they possess certain attributes. Only then can these be considered as *al-Ibādah* (worship). Without that, such acts cannot be construed as such, as will be covered exhaustively in this present volume.

Definitive proofs enumerated

There are several passages with the Qur'ān that provide for definitive conclusive proofs upon this matter, which will suffice. Here, these are

⁵ Qur'ān, 36: 23

⁶ Qur'ān, 21: 21

enumerated to provide the clear exposition that this subject requires. The first of which is set out in the following verses as they appear in *Surah al-Naml*. The words and expression of Allah the Exalted and Majestic alone suffice, for indeed He is the most truthful of all speakers.

قُلْ أَحْمَدُ اللَّهُ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا مَا يُشْرِكُونَ، أَمْنَ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَنْزَلَ
لَهُم مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَبْنَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ تُثْبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا إِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ بِلَّهُ هُمْ قَوْمٌ
يَعْبُدُونَ، أَمْنَ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خَلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيٍّ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَرِّيْنِ حَاجِزًا إِلَهٌ
مَعَ اللَّهِ بِلَّهُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ، أَمْنَ يُجْبِبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خَلَاءً لِأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ
مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ، أَمْنَ يَهُبِّيْكُمْ فِي ظُلْمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ يُشَرِّأَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَحْمَتِهِ
إِلَهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشَرِّكُونَ، أَمْنَ بَيْنَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِدُهُ وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌ مَعَ
اللَّهِ قُلْ هَاتُوا بِرُهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Say [Prophet], 'Praise be to Allah and peace on the servants He has chosen. Who is better: Allah, or those they set up as partners with Him? Who created the heavens and earth? Who sends down water from the sky for you— with which We cause gardens of delight to grow: you have no power to make the trees grow in them— is it another god beside Allah? No! But they are people who take others to be equal with Allah.

Who is it that made the earth a stable place to live? Who made rivers flow through it? Who set immovable mountains on it and created a barrier between the fresh and salt water? Is it another god beside Allah? No! But most of them do not know. Who is it that answers the distressed when they call upon Him? Who removes their suffering? Who makes you successors in the earth? Is it another god beside Allah? Little notice you take! Who is it that guides you through the darkness on land and sea? Who sends the winds as heralds of good news before His mercy? Is it another god beside Allah?

Allah is far above the partners they put beside him! Who is it that creates life and reproduces it? Who is it that gives you provision from the heavens and earth? Is it another god beside Allah? ' Say, 'Show me your evidence then, if what you say is true.'⁷

Marvel at the eloquence expressed by the aforementioned verses. From these we can see that the *Ilāh* is the entity or being which is capable of creation, particularly the creation of the heavens and the earth, independently, whether worshipped or not. The One who sends down water from the sky, causing

⁷ Qur'ān, 27: 59/64

beautiful gardens to grow, done by way of its own intrinsic power, independently, whether worshipped or not, meaning, irrespective of human agency or even existence. Following this, the verses to continue in enumerating the attributes of *al-Ilāh* that make Him befitting of that title – god or deity, in considerable detail. These cover the matter of creating the earth, with its wonderous mountains and rivers; making the earth a suitable abode for life, responding to the call of the distressed, guiding them through the darkness of land and sea. Additionally, there is the relief given to the suffering, appointing mankind as viceregents upon the earth, initiating creation and repeating and so on and so forth. All of this is done by His inherent power, independently, regardless of any human-agency relating to whether He is worshipped or not. Hence, there is no point in seeking proof from people for the supposed existence of such attributes in their imaginary false deities, as the verse says:

إِنَّمَا مَعَ اللَّهِ مَا هَأْتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*Is it another god beside Allah? Say, 'Show me your evidence then, if what you say is true.'*⁸

Here the challenge present presumes that those addressed, or at the least, some of them believe that their ‘deities’ are in possession of either all or some of these attributes. Otherwise, they could have responded with a definitive reply in arguing that they never actually claimed as such, so why the need to ask for proof. Far be it from Allah that there could exist anyone who could silence, refute, or establish evidence against Him. There is also a similar proof covered in the previous volume as it relates to the verse of *Fasad*. There is copious knowledge and wisdom contained within it. Taken together with the contextual verses, this reads as follows:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَا يَعْبَدُنَّ، لَوْ أَرْدَنَا أَنْ تَنْخَذَ لَهُوَا لَأَتَخْذَنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا إِنْ كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ،
بَلْ نَقْرِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ رَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ، وَلَهُ مِنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَتَحَسِّرُونَ، يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّهَ وَالنَّهَارُ لَا يَنْثَرُونَ، أَمْ
أَتَخْذُوا لِهِهِ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُشْبِرُونَ، لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ سَدَّا فَسْبَحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ، لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسَأَّلُونَ

⁸ Qur'ān, 27: 59/64

أَمْ أَتَخْذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ اللَّهِ قُلْ هَأْتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ، هَذَا ذَكَرٌ مِنْ مَعِي وَذَكَرٌ مِنْ قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ
فَهُمْ مُعْرَضُونَ، وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَأَعْبَدُونَ، وَقَالُوا أَخْذُ
الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عَبَادُ مُكْرَمُونَ، لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْفَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ، يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
خَلْفُهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا مِنْ حَسْبِيَّهُ مُسْفَقُونَ، وَمَنْ يَقْلُ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي أَلَّهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ قَدْلِكَ
نَجْزِيَهُ جَهَنَّمْ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them playfully. If We had wished for a pastime, We could have found it within Us— if We had wished for any such thing. No! We hurl the truth against falsehood, and truth obliterates it— see how falsehood vanishes away! Woe to you [people] for the way you describe Allah!

Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary; they glorify Him tirelessly night and day. Have they chosen any gods from the earth who can give life to the dead? If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins: Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say: He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account.

Have they chosen to worship other gods instead of Him? Say, 'Bring your proof. This is the Scripture for those who are with me and the Scripture for those who went before me.' But most of them do not recognise the truth, so they pay no heed. We never sent any Messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so worship Me.' And they say, 'The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.' May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants: they do not speak before He speaks and they act by His command.

He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede without His permission—indeed they themselves stand in awe of Him. If any of them were to claim, 'I am a god beside Him,' We would reward them with Hell: this is how We reward evildoers.⁹

Once again, there would be no meaning contained therein to the demand for proof from them for the existence of such attributes in their ‘deities’ if those who are addressed, or at the least some of them, did not actually believe that their ‘deities’ possessed either some or all of the attributes as enumerated. The

⁹ Qur'ān, 21: 16/29

people would have responded, evidently, with a decisive reply, we never claimed as such. Following this, the verses quickly invalidate the notion of ascribing ‘offspring’ to Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted. It refutes any attempt to level the claim that their supposed ‘deities’ are the ‘children of Allah,’ while lacking any part in creation, control, or governance, which were the subjects of the prior argument. Here we can repeat what has been elucidated thus far, or something similar to it. He the Exalted says:

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ، وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكُونُ
صَدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُغْلِبُونَ، وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأُولَى وَالآخِرَةِ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ، فَلَنْ
أَرَيَّمُ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الظَّلَلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيُكُمْ بِلَذَّاتِكُنُونَ فَلَنْ
أَرَيَّمُ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيُكُمْ بِلَذَّاتِكُنُونَ فِيهِ أَفْلَأَ
ثُبُرُونَ، وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلَتَبْقَعُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعْنَكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ، وَيَوْمَ
يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِي الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَرْعُمُونَ، وَتَرَنَّا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا فَقَاتَنَا هَنُوْا بِرَهَنْكُمْ فَعَلَمُوا أَنَّ
الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

Your Lord creates what He pleases and chooses those He will— they have no choice— so glory be to Allah, and may He be Exalted above the partners they ascribe to Him! Your Lord knows what their hearts conceal and what they reveal. He is Allah; there is no god but Him; all praise belongs to Him in this world and the next; His is the Judgement; and to Him you shall be returned.

Say [Prophet], ‘Just think, if Allah were to cast perpetual night over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than He could bring you light? Do you not listen?’

Say, ‘Just think, if Allah were to cast perpetual day over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than He could give you night in which to rest? Do you not see? In His mercy He has given you night and day, so that you may rest and seek His bounty and be grateful.’

The Day will come when He will call out to them, saying, ‘Where are the partners you claimed for Me? We shall call a witness from every community, and say, ‘Produce your evidence,’ and then they will know that truth belongs to Allah alone; the gods they invented will forsake them.¹⁰

Once again, as previously outlined, there would be no meaning here in demanding the producing of evidence from them for the existence of such

¹⁰ Qur'ān, 28: 68/75

attributes in their alleged ‘deities’ if those addressed, or at least some of them, did not actually believe that their ‘deities’ possessed all or at the very least some of these attributes. Otherwise, the people, or some of them, would have responded with the same silencing and decisive reply that they never claimed as such, may Allah forbid. He the Exalted and Majestic says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ، حَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعْدُ اللَّهِ حَقًّا وَهُوَ الْغَرِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ، حَلَقَ
السَّمَاءَ مَاءَ فَأَبْنَيْتَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ، هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرْوَنِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ؛ بِلِ الظَّالِمُونَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

But for those who believe and do righteous deeds, there will be Gardens of bliss where they will stay: that is Allah's true promise, and He is the Almighty, the All Wise. He created the heavens without any visible support, and He placed firm mountains on the earth - in case it should shake under you - and He spread all kinds of animals around it. We sent down water from the sky, with which We made every kind of good plant grow on earth: all this is Allah's creation. Now, show Me what your ‘other gods’ besides Him have created. No, the disbelievers are clearly astray.¹¹

Also note here the wording of the specific demand or challenge, ‘Now, show Me what your ‘other gods’ besides Him have created,’ which would be meaningless if the addresses did not believe that some created things were indeed the product of their supposed gods and not of Allah. Otherwise, again, the people could have provided a definitive response in arguing that ‘We never claimed our gods created any such things whatsoever.’ None can provide a rebuttal to Allah, let alone mount a challenge against His evidences.

Mutual hindrance

The second set of conclusive arguments upon this matter are in relation to the verse which was covered in the previous volume of this series, regarding that of *al-Tamānu* - mutual hindrance. Taken together with the verse relating to *Fasad*, these provide cogent compelling evidence.¹² He the Mighty and Sublime has expressly said:

¹¹ Qur'ān, 31: 8/11

¹² See Volume II of this series, (Part IV) chapters 13 and 14.

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ فَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَّهُبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others.

May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!¹³

From the wording of this verse, we can discern that either this being acting by will and free choice possesses complete and absolute freedom by way of its own inherent power, independently. It is the one who creates, reigns supreme over others; subjugates without being overcome or rivalled. It has the ability of granting protection without the need for it itself; none has the ability to pursue it or escape it by flight. Or, it is a being which is born of a divine entity, thus making it a member of a 'divine kind' or 'divine species.'

All of these considerations are matters which are existential, namely, relating to the essence of that being and the actions it undertakes. There is no connection whatsoever to the existence or non-existence of other beings who would submit and humble themselves before it; drawing near with love, fear and devotion, seeking to glorify and sanctify, or any antecedent acts, be they related to bowing, prostration, offerings and sacrifice that have been referred to with the term or definition of god or deity. Thus following on from this, the correct meaning of the term *Ilāh* [إِلَهٌ] – god/deity is:

الإِلَهُ هُوَ الْكَانِنُ الْفَاعِلُ بِالْمُشَيَّةِ الْمُطْلَقَةِ وَالْأَخْتِيَارِ الْحَرِّ، ذُو الْقُدْرَةِ الْذَّاتِيَّةِ عَلَى الْفَعْلِ الْمُسْتَقْلِ
عَنِ الْغَيْرِ تَنَمُّ الْإِسْتِقْلَالَ (وَمِنْ أَخْصِّ تُلُوكِ الْأَفْعَالِ: الْخَلْقُ وَالْقَهْرُ، وَلَكِنَّهَا لَيْسَ مُحَسُّرَةً فِي
هَذِهِ)؛ أَوْ هُوَ الْكَانِنُ الْمُتَوَلِّ مِنْ كَانِنٍ إِلَاهِيٍّ: فَهُوَ إِذَا فَرِدَ مِنْ أَفْرَادٍ (النَّوْعُ إِلَاهِيٌّ) أَوْ (الجَنْسُ
الإِلَاهِيُّ)

al-Ilāh – god / deity, is a being who acts by way of absolute will and free choice; possessor of inherent power related to independent action that is completely autonomous from all others (with creation and subjugation being among its most distinctive acts, though not limited to these); or it is a being which is born of a divine entity, thus being an individual member of the divine type or divine species.

¹³ Qur'ān, 23: 91. As set out in previous volume, For a quick introduction to the topic of 'mutual hindrance,' readers in English can also consult the translation of *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafī* by al-Taftāzāni (d. 1390CE). See: *A commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani on the Creed of Najm al-Din al-Nasafi* (1950), Translated by Earl Edgar Elder, (Columbia University Press: New York), [pp. 37/38].

By way perhaps of a more lenient alternate phrase, one could postulate that 'al-*Ilāh*, god or deity, is fundamentally a supernatural being.'

Ibn Taymiyyah's substitutes

At this juncture we would hasten to add that the proof underpinning that of *al-Tamānu* - mutual hindrance, is what we have set out in this present work,¹⁴ which in essence, is based upon what Imām Ibn Taymiyyah elucidated in his works. However, that has been refined with significant modifications being made to the text. The reason being, is that Ibn Taymiyyah utilised the term *Rabb* – lord, instead of the correct word, which is covered by the texts of revelation, that of *Ilāh*. By making that substitution, it stood at odds with the explicit wording of the verse. Many examples of this can be shown, for example in the following where Ibn Taymiyyah said:

- 'If it is assumed that there are two-Lords - *Rabbān* [ربان], independence becomes impossible.' Rather, the correct wording should have been two-gods, *Ilāhān* [إلهان].
- 'If it is assumed that there are two-Lords in co-operation, where neither acts without the assistance of the other,' which is mentioned in the work entitled *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*. Here, probably as a result of an error made by the editor, publisher, or even both, they placed this under the chapter heading of 'The impossibility relating to the existence of two-Lords for creation.'¹⁵
- 'Hence it is clear that it is impossible for the (temporal) world to have two-Lords.'¹⁶
- 'If there were two-Lords, the separate creation of each would be distinct from the other. As Allah the Almighty says: (Nor is there any god beside Him) - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others,' [23: 91].¹⁷
- 'There, and other aspects show the impossibility of two-Lords, each of them helping or hindering the other.'¹⁸

¹⁴ See Volume 2, chapter 13.

¹⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah* [Vol. 2, pp. 180, 182 (Shamela edition)].

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. [Vol. 3, p. 312]

¹⁸ Ibid. [Vol. 3, p. 310].

Given the aforementioned quotes from Ibn Taymiyyah one can evidently see that in totality they contradict the text of the Qur'an, which specifically uses the term *Ilāh* [إله] - god/deity, doesn't utilise the word *Rabb* [رب] – lord, in any of those contexts originally. All of that was done in the futile attempt to try and apply his flawed definitions of *al-Rububiyyah* and *al-Uluhiyyah* within his broader, and indeed incorrect, approach to the definitions of *Tawheed*. Compounding this, Ibn Taymiyyah was forced to excessively use the term *Qādir* [قادر] when outlining his line of argumentation which necessitates considering the matter of *al-Qudra* [القدرة] – ability, particularly as it relates to the ability to create, as a key element in understanding the word *Ilāh* [إله]; that necessity contradicting his flawed definition of *Uluhiyyah* itself. Such errors are not minor, nor easily overlooked. They are destructive and fatal errors in these critical definitions, which has the propensity to lead one to *kufr*. This matter will be clarified throughout the forthcoming chapters. Rather we have sought to fundamentally deconstruct and demolish this train of thought from its very foundations by way of this present book, by the help and mercy of Allah the Almighty.

At this juncture we would be swift to point out that Ibn Taymiyyah's error in substituting the word *Rabb* for the word *Ilāh* in the context of discussing the proof and verse related to mutual hindrance should not be construed as being malicious and done with deliberate intent.¹⁹ May Allah forbid that. Rather, we would argue that this was a mistake, grave and heinous, but a mistake nonetheless, be that caused by a temporary lapse, a parting absence of reason or blindness of insight. Otherwise, it would in reality be a clear objection to Allah, may He be Exalted. It would be as it saying to Allah, 'The wording employed in the text of the Qur'an is done in error – the term *Rabb* should have been used instead of the word *Ilāh*.' Without question such a notion would be explicit clear *kufr*.

Even if the matter of this mistake made by Ibn Taymiyyah were to be judged from the perspective of the Orientalist – one beguiled by *kufr* and explicit denial of the Prophethood of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such an individual, if bestowed with a modicum of knowledge, reason and fairness, would undoubtedly conclude that the wording of *Ilāh* is

¹⁹ The Arabic edition carries some additional references to the places where this is also found in *Majmu' al-Fatāwa'* [Vol. 2, pp. 32/37; Vol. 20, pp. 170/183 (Shamela edition)].

more fitting to express the matters as discussed than the word *Rabb*. The Orientalists, by and large, ascribe authorship of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad, and even they readily concede he was a pure Arab, by tongue and lineage, raised in Mecca, Arabic being his mother tongue. The region surrounding Mecca at the time of revelation, including Tā'if and the tribes that were resided there, is the very heartland and source of the classical Arabic language. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him didn't have to undertake years of arduous study to acquire the language, nor travel to achieve that. It was his mother tongue, he was nurtured in the environment itself.

By way of contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah was born in the Levant, in Ḥarrān, being most likely of Kurdish descent. His native tongue was Levantine Arabic, learning the classical form of the language through books, teachers and arduous study. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him grew up in Arabia which was under the dark cloud of *Shirk*; an environment in which *Asnām* – idols, dominated. Evidently he would have heard the stories, myths and common speak of the Arabs in relation to this, witnessing the rituals of the dark cults of *Shirk*, particularly during the pilgrimage season. His direct relative, his uncle Abu Lahab was one of the custodians of the false gods. By way of stark contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah was raised in an Islamic environment renowned for piety and scholarship. He never bore witness to the evil practices of the *mushrikeen* in such a manner, nor did he contend with them growing up. Therefore, how could he possibly begin to comprehend the meanings intended by the pure Arabs at the dawn of revelation regarding the word *Ilāh*? Taken further, how could he grasp the essence of the *Asnām* let alone ever begin to really fathom the nature of *Shirk* among the Arabs?

Regardless of how a scholar or diligent researcher has a certain degree of leeway in crafting terminology as per strict scholarly principles, they cannot violate the nature of language itself, be that by usurping it, desecrating its integrity, or substituting it haphazardly. Particularly acute in this respect is the Arabic language itself, since it is the domain of the protected *Dhikr*, the final revelation sent to mankind. Irrespective of how we approach the definition of *al-Uluhiyyah*, it cannot under any circumstances be devoid of the following critical components. Firstly, that it relates to the matter of 'intrinsic agency,' which is characterised by absolute independent will and free choice, exercised in complete autonomy. Notable among its specific aspects is the matter of creatorship – underpinned by absolute independence, and

sovereignty. Secondly, as set out previously, is the matter of derivation, that is, the notion that a divine being is belonging to a particular divine genus or species. Without this, it would be tantamount to a nullification of the verse which relates to mutual hindrance. It would distort words from their proper correct context, placing one at odds with the specific wording that Allah has chosen for the final revelation. Clearly that inevitably leads to *kufr*, may Allah protect us from such evil errors.

Moreover, there is also another conclusive argument, which we find in the story of Ibrāhim peace be upon him and his people. However, the truth is that the story of Ibrāhim peace be upon him with his people contains far more knowledge and wisdom than just reaffirming the definition of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) or further clarifying the nature of the *Asnām* (idols), or even elucidating the reality of *Shirk*, as has already been demonstrated by the multitude of textual evidences from the Qur’ān which have already been presented thus far. Foremost though among them, is the verse which relates to the matter of *al-Tamānu* (mutual hindrance), which by itself should more than suffice. The study relating to Ibrāhim peace be upon him and his people will appear in the next section (Part VII) of this present book.

6. What is a God?

So, given the preceding chapters one may reasonably ask, what is a *Ilāh* – god/deity? Here, we reiterate and emphasise some of the certainties we derived at thus far. To begin, the first fundamental truth is that the concept of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) can never, under any circumstances, be devoid of either: *autonomous agency*, with absolute free will and independent choice, particularly with regard to *independent creative power*, by free will and independent choice, and *inherent superiority and dominion*, by free will and independent choice. ‘Autonomous agency’ is a concise term for ‘*inherent ability to act*.’ Or, the notion of generation from another divine being, meaning affiliation to the divine type or divine genus.

Regarding the second fundamental truth, it is also definitively certain, based on the aforementioned undeniable proofs—denial of which would render a person outside of Islam, and indeed, outside of reason itself—that the concept of *Uluhiyyah* refers to inherent attributes of the being called *Ilāh*, regardless of the existence or non-existence of other beings and their actions, or their relationship to the being in question. In this sense, the definition must exclude any explicit or implicit reference to the actions of creatures, whatever those actions may be called, and even exclude reference to the existence of those creatures altogether. Thus, *Uluhiyyah* includes attributes and intrinsic considerations of the being in question: if that being is eternal, then it is a deity from eternity, and it remains a deity as long as it exists. If the being is generated or created, then it is a deity from the moment of its creation or generation, and it remains a deity as long as it exists. None of this has anything to do with the actions of the worshippers.

Thirdly, if *Uluhiyyah* is defined according to a correct Qur'ānic understanding - which is necessarily a definition entirely independent of the actions of creation / created beings, whatever those actions may be called or classified as, and even independent of the existence of those creatures altogether, then it is conceptually *prior*, necessarily and inevitably, to the definition of *Ibādah* (worship). The concept of *Uluhiyyah* is the original and fundamental concept, and it is logically and intellectually prior to the concept of *Ibādah*. Therefore, the concept of *Ibādah*, according to the necessities of sense and reason, must either be (a) built upon the concept of *Uluhiyyah*, dependent upon it and related to it. This is the certain truth, upon which we will provide definitive proofs. Or it is (b) it must be entirely independent of the concept of *Uluhiyyah*. This is impossible, both rationally and legally, as it leads to egregious consequences, one of which is that '*worship of other than Allah*' would not constitute *Shirk* unless that 'other' was a deity, and if not, it would not. This is utterly egregious, contradictory, and in conflict with human nature and the consensus of rational beings, as will become fully clear in the following discussion. Thus, the necessary and inevitable approach to defining the *Ilāh* is to say:

The *Ilāh* (god/deity) is the Being with inherent ability to act by free will and absolute choice, entirely independent from others (and among the most specific of such actions are creation and dominion); or the *Ilāh* is the Being generated from another deity, making it a member of the divine type or divine genus.

This is our precise definition, which is completely free from the term *Ibādah* or any action of the creation, as previously established. Here the discerned reader can refer to the previous volume in this series, in particular Part V, which exhaustively covers the historical reality of *Shirk* among the Arabs. In short, you will find that all the 'deities' of the Arab *mushrikeen*, when analysed thoroughly, fall into one of these two categories – the vast majority being those purported to be 'born of Allah,' offspring in the form of sons and daughters. A minority belonged to the other type, those with full 'independent agency,' such as the supposed 'god of evil,' whether eternal or created in the dualistic beliefs of the Magians and heretics. In fact, this situation, or something close to it, applies to all *mushrikeen*, both ancient and

modern. Nevertheless, some have insisted on the forced and flawed inclusion of the term *'Ibādah* – worship, in the definition, as did Imām al-Rāzī, who stated: 'The deity is the one who has the power to perform actions, and if He were to perform them, He would be deserving of worship.' This is found in *Tafsir al-Rāzī* where he states:

Fourth: some have said that *Ilāh* is not simply the object of worship but in fact *al-Ilāh huwal'alladhi yastahiqqu 'an yakuna ma'budān* 'the *Ilāh* is the one who deserves to be worshipped (sic. or deserving of worship). However, this too faces the objection that He would not be the *Ilāh* of objects, beasts, children and the insane, nor would He have been *Ilāh* in pre-eternity. [A third opinion] is that it means 'capable of such acts which would make Him deserving of worship from such as can perform it.' Know that the first two opinions mean that He was not *Ilāh* in pre-eternity, whereas He was indeed *Ilāh* in pre-eternity according to the third.¹

Furthermore, the following has also been cited in the *Tafsir al-Rāzī*:

Some of them said: '*al-Ilāh huwal'Ma'bud*'; yet this is mistaken for two-reasons. The first of which, that He the Almighty was (already) *al-Ilāh* in pre-eternity and was not worshipped; secondly, that He the Almighty confirmed in the text of the Qur'ān that there are others which are worshipped, by His saying: '*You [disbelievers] and what you worship instead of Allah will be fuel for Hell: that is where you will go,*' [21: 98]. Rather, the deity is the one who has the power to perform actions, and if He were to perform them, He would be deserving of worship.²

The following has been mentioned in Ibn Sīdah's *al-Mukhassas*:

¹ *Tafsir al-Rāzī* [Vol. p. 1, p. 165 (print edition)]. Here we have utilised the English translation, albeit modified, by Dr Saeed. See: Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī - The Great Exegesis *al-Tafsir al-Kabir* Volume 1: The *Fātiha*, (2018), translated by Sohaib Saeed (The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge) [p. 247].

² *Ibid.* [Vol. 7, pp. 6/7 (Arabic print edition)]. Here we have edited the quote slightly to include the full verse in translation; al-Rāzī abbreviated that to only: '*You and what you worship instead of Allah.*'

Furthermore, it was said: ‘the *Ilāh* is the One deserving of worship,’ and it was also said: ‘He is the One who is Capable of what worship necessitates.’ Whoever claims that the meaning of *Ilāh* is the same as *Ma’bud* (object of worship) has erred, and the Qur’ān and the *Shari’ah* of Islam testify against his error, because all of that proves that ‘there is no god but Allah alone who has no partner.’ And there is no doubt that the *Aṣnām* (idols) were worshipped during the period of *al-Jāhiliyya*. Despite being worshiped, they were not considered deities. It has thus become clear that the true deity is the one who rightfully deserves worship and must therefore be worshiped.³

The approach of Imām al-Rāzī and Ibn Sīdah al-Andalusī may be a plausible one, but it has both essential and formal defects, which, in truth, render it a flawed definition, even if we were to concede that it qualifies as a definition or an explanatory statement. Firstly, it is incomplete for two key reasons: ‘*The deservingness of worship*’ may not only be related to ‘*the ability to perform certain actions*,’ but also to ‘*the possession of certain attributes*.’ Indeed, it may be related solely to particular attributes, without any reference to agency, as is typically the case with beings generated from a deity, that is, beings of the divine type or genus. It is not comprehensive, even if it is exclusive, because it excludes an important and significant type of deity or object of worship: namely, beings of the divine type or genus, that is, those generated from a divine being, as explained earlier.

Second, it is inverted and problematic: it defines the simple, obvious, and immediate through the complex, obscure, and distant. A proper definition should be the opposite; otherwise, it leads to confusion rather than clarification. This is because the concept of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) encompasses the concepts of *ability*, *will*, *free choice*, *action*, and *independence*, all of which are simple, fundamental concepts that are easily grasped by the innate human disposition through internal sense (introspection) and the necessities of reason. On the other hand, the actions of worshippers are complex and compounded. For example, the act of prostration to a particular being cannot be conceived without a *belief* or *mental image* of the one being prostrated to, held by the one performing the prostration. There is also the existence of emotional and psychological states within the worshipper

³ Ibn Sīdah *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* [Vol. 7, p. 747 (print edition, 2006)]

towards that being upon seeing or encountering it, or recalling it in the mind, such as love, reverence, or fear of its harm or power, which serve as the *motive* for the prostration. The *direction of intent* and the *will to act* in prostration as an expression of those emotional and psychological states within the worshipper cannot be overlooked either. The movement of the muscles and limbs of the worshipper’s body to assume the known posture of prostration.

Third, it is ambiguous in two respects: ‘*Ibādah* has not been clearly defined beforehand, despite the significant risk that its definition might implicitly or explicitly include mention of the *Ilāh*. If this occurs, it leads to circular reasoning, which necessarily invalidates the definition. No mention or clarification has been made regarding the *actions* that the *Ilāh* is capable of performing, and which, if performed, would render Him deserving of worship. Moreover, the attributes, if they exist, that would qualify the *Ilāh* as deserving of worship have not been mentioned either.

7. ‘God is the One that is worshipped’

Now we turn to the matter of addressing the invalidity of the false statement which says: *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud* – ‘the god/deity is the one who is worshipped.’ It is imperative to thoroughly dismantle it from its very foundation. To claim that ‘the god/deity is the one who is worshipped’ implies that *al-Uluhiyyah* is *not* one of the attributes of Allah; that He Exalted and Glorified was not an *Ilāh* for all eternity. Indeed, these are heinous statements of *kufr*. To begin, two statements from al-Rāzi will be outlined and then discussed in turn. Each of these statements has been cited in his seminal work of *Tafsir*, and as will be seen, contain heinous conclusions if followed through according to the line of reasoning set out. Following that, a third quotation will be presented from Ibn Sīdah.

Third: some have disputed the claim that *Ilāh* means ‘the One who is worshipped,’ citing the following: firstly, that the *Awthān* were worshipped although they are not *āliha* (gods). Second, He is God of inanimate objects and [non-rational] beasts, even though it is impossible for them to worship. Third, He is God of those (who are judged to be) insane people and children, even though they do not worship that He the Almighty is the God of those (who are judged to be) insane and children, although they don’t undertake (acts of) worship. Fourth, being worshipped’ does not represent an attribute, because it simply means that He is known and mentioned by that person who intends to serve Him. On this basis, *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood) would not be an Attribute of Allah the Almighty.

Fifth, it would lead to the conclusion that He was not *Ilāh* in pre- eternity.¹

Enquiry 2 [Possible Derivations]

[Interpretation A: *Alaha* (To worship)]

Those who said that the Name is derived [from this] have discussed a number of issues. First, *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud* - the *Ilāh* is the object of worship whether by right or in falsehood. Then religious convention made this refer predominantly to the One worshipped by right. On the basis of this interpretation, He was not *Ilāh* in pre- eternity. Know that Allah is [indeed] the One deserving of worship as the Bestower of all favours in root and branch. This is because an existent is either necessary or contingent: the necessary is only Allah, whereas all else is contingent. The contingent only comes into being by preponderance [of its existence over non-existence], so all contingents only exist by His creation, either from nothing or via an intermediary. Therefore, all types of favour which the servant experiences come, necessarily, from Allah. It is thus known that the utmost of favour comes from Allah. Furthermore, worship represents the upmost of magnification. Hence we say: the utmost of magnification is only deserved by One from Whom the utmost of favour has come; accordingly, the only One deserving of worship is Allah the Almighty.²

Further to this, the following has been mentioned in Ibn Sīdah’s *al-Mukhaṣṣas*:

‘Allah,’ the original form of Allah is ‘*Alaha*;’ the *hamza* was omitted and the *alif* and the *lām* became a necessary substitute. Hence, we are left with a name that is similar to a proper name; this is the doctrine of Sibawayh and the skilled grammarians. Furthermore, it was said: ‘the *Ilāh* is the One deserving of worship,’ and it was also said: ‘He is the One who is Capable of what worship necessitates.’ Whoever claims that the meaning of *Ilāh* is the same as *Ma’bud* (worshipped) has erred, and the Qur’ān and the *Shari’ah* of Islam testify against his error,

¹ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 1, p. 165 (print edition)]; Sohaib Saeed, *Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzi - The Great Exegesis* [pp. 246/247]. Dr Saeed has translated ‘*al-Ilāhiyyah*’ as divinity. Not to be confused with *al-Uluhiyyah*, we have adopted the word ‘godhood’ here to make that distinction.

² *Ibid.* [p. 164]; (English) albeit modified here, [pp. 245/246].

because all of that proves that ‘there is no god but Allah alone who has no partner.’ And there is no doubt that the *Aṣnām* (idols) were worshipped during the period of *al-Jāhiliyya*. Despite being worshiped, they were not considered deities. It has thus become clear that the true deity is the one who rightfully deserves worship and must therefore be worshiped.³

Comment and analysis

By saying that *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud* – ‘the god/deity is the one who is worshipped,’ necessarily necessitates other insidious and heinous follow-on points. These include, that the testimonial of Islam, that there is no god except Allah means that everything that is worshipped is construed as being a god, or represents some parts of god or even an ‘idol’ of god. May Allah forbid that; Exalted and Sanctified is He far above that. This is one of the most heinous types of *kufr*; it is the statement of the most tyrannical philosophising extremists of the Sufis, and the clever *mushrikeen* philosophers, who believe in the flawed conceptions of *Wahdāt al-Wujud*, *al-Ittiḥād al-‘Aām* or even *al-Hulool al-‘Aām*. Alternate corollaries to this also include that Allah does not exist, and neither do all the other deities; the actions, and words that people call *Ibādah* - worship, because of their backwardness and ignorance, and their failure to free themselves from the ideas they inherited from the ages of magic and superstition, are meaningless actions and sayings. Rather that can be considered only physical exercise, or psychological treatment, or nonsense verbal statements for entertainment, nothing more. This is the saying of the atheists and unbelievers in general, particularly among the supposed liberals in the West.

This is all so clear and necessary that the greats did not miss it; it is a reference to the Wahhābi Sect and their Imām, Ibn Taymiyyah, whom they take as a lord who would make a *bidah*’ (innovation), and they consider it a *Deen*. In his debate with the Jahmites and the Mutazilites, Ibn Taymiyyah literally said:

The Mutazilites may use it as evidence against *Tawheed*, ‘*Adl* (justice), and *Hikmah* (wisdom) that they claim, and it does not contain any

³ Ibn Sīdah *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* [Vol. 7, p. 747 (print edition, 2006)]

evidence for them, rather it is an evidence against them, and against their opponents, the Jabriyyah; the followers of al-Jahm ibn Ṣafwān who say: ‘everything that can be done is just,’ and they deny wisdom, so they say: ‘It is not done for wisdom, so they have no argument for it.’ He declared that there is no god but Him, and this does not mean denying the attributes. Furthermore, they call the denial of attributes *Tawheed*, but rather *al-Ilāh huwal’ Mustahiq lil-Ibādah* - ‘the *Ilāh* is the One worthy of worship.’ And *al-Ibādah* cannot be except accompanied by love for the *ma’bud* (worshipped).⁴

We do not deny that Ibn Taymiyyah’s words on this matter are confusing, like other Imām’s, because they unconsciously fell into types of hidden ‘circular causes,’ which we alluded to previously, and will appear little by little. However, what we have mentioned in regard to him is the strongest and most likely, especially with the controlled preponderance in case of opposition, and citing the entire texts in their context - contrary to the Wahhābi’s malicious habit of truncating texts, taking them out of their context, and distorting them. An example of that is the following:

And His saying in relation to the verse: ‘*Whenever it was said to them, ‘There is no deity but Allah*,’ they became arrogant,’ [37: 35]; and there is no doubt that it addresses the two types of *Shirk*: the major and the minor. Besides, it also addresses whoever acts arrogantly against what Allah has ordered him to do and does not obey Him. In fact, it is the fulfilment of the saying: there is no god but Allah; *al-Ilāh huwal’ Mustahiq lil-Ibādah* - ‘the *Ilāh* is the One worthy of worship.’ Thus, everything with which Allah is worshipped is part of the complete devotion of the servants to Him. Whoever acts arrogantly against some of his worship, and obeys and listens to other than Him, will not fulfill

⁴ Cited in two places, as per Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa* [Vol. 8, p. 84 (print edition); and *Tafsīr* Ibn Taymiyyah [Vol. 3, p. 152 (print edition)].

the meaning underpinning the statement - there is no god but Allah in this (particular) context.⁵

There are two-additional citations worthy of consideration here that have also been cited cross the works produced by Ibn Taymiyyah, namely:

Indeed, *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud aladthi yastahiq an yu’bad* – ‘the *Ilāh* is the One who is worshipped, deserving to be worshipped.’ And *al-Rabb* (the Lord) is the One who has command over his servant and conducts his affairs.⁶

(Regarding) His saying: *Lā ‘ilāha ‘illā Anta* - ‘*There is no God but You*,’ [21: 87] is a proof that *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood) belongs only to Him. *al-Ilāhiyyah* includes the perfection of his Knowledge, His Power, His Kindness, Mercy, and Wisdom. All of that proves His benevolence to His servants, for the *Ilāh* is *al-Mā’luhu*, and *al-Mā’luhu* is the One deserving of worship, and the fact that He deserves to be worshipped is because of the attributes attributed to Him that make it necessary for Him to be loved with the utmost love, submitted to with the utmost submission; worship includes the utmost of love with the utmost of humility.⁷

⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa* [Vol. 4, p. 49 (print edition)] and *Kitāb al-‘Imān* [p. 64 (print edition)]. There is a little disparity here between the original Arabic text in Ibn Taymiyyah’s work and how this often has been rendered into English. For example in one of the standard translations this passage is rendered as - ‘The verse ‘*For they, when they were told that there is no god except Allah, would puff themselves up with pride*’ (37:35) refers to both unbelievers, the major and minor sinners, as well as to those who puff themselves up with pride about what Allah commands. For not puffing oneself with pride is part of affirming that there is no god but Allah, Who alone deserves to be worshipped. And whoever puffs himself up with pride about worshiping Allah, obeying and listening to other than Allah, does not confirm [in this context] that there is no god but Allah.’ See p. 8 - Ibn Taymiyyah (2009), *Kitāb al-‘Imān* (The Book of Faith), translated by Salman Hassan al-Ani and Shadia Ahmed Tel, (Islamic Book Trust: Kuala Lumpur). Interestingly the verses when read together, from [37: 33/39] are as follows: ‘*On that Day they will all share the torment: this is how We deal with the guilty. Whenever it was said to them, ‘There is no deity but Allah,’ they became arrogant, and said, ‘Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?’ ‘No: he brought the truth and confirmed the earlier messengers; you will taste the painful torment, and be repaid only according to your deeds.’*

⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah *al-Fatāwa al-Kubra* [Vol. 7, p. 378 (Shamela edition)]

⁷ Ibid. [Vol. 5, p. 227 (print edition)]. The quote, rendered from the famous *ayah* concerning Yunus and the whale at [21: 87]: *And remember the man with the whale, when he went off angrily, thinking We could not restrict him, but then he cried out in the deep darkness, ‘There is no God but You, glory be to You, I was of the wrongdoers.’*

It is precisely the same in the work entitled *Iqāmat al-Dalīl ‘alā Ibṭāl al-Tahlīl* and transmitted verbatim in countless books of the Wahhābi sect, but people’s brains have been corrupted, if they had brains at all; they transmit this without any understanding.⁸ Something close to that was mentioned in a book entitled *al-Shahādatān Ma’nāhuma wa mā Tastalzimuhu kulla minhuma*:

Shaykh al-Islam said: ‘The *Ilāh* is the One who is worshipped and obeyed.’ He also said: ‘There is no god but Allah alone,’ is a proof that *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood) belongs only to Him. *al-Ilāhiyyah* includes the perfection of his Knowledge, His Power, His Kindness, Mercy, and Wisdom, which are the proof of His benevolence to His servants, for the *Ilāh* is the deity, and the deity is the One deserving of worship, and the fact that He deserves to be worshipped is because of the attributes attributed to Him that make it necessary for Him to be loved with the utmost love, submitted to with the utmost submission; worship includes the utmost of love with the utmost of humility. Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said: ‘The *Ilāh* is the One Whom hearts are devoted, with love and reverence; repentance, honour, veneration, humility and submission, fear, hope and trust.’⁹

Next, the following has been cited in the *Tafsīr* of al-Rāzī. One should seriously ponder over how he has set forth his argument in this passage:

The Name *Allah* has been used in this context (‘I seek refuge in God’) rather than another [Divine] Name because it has a greater effect in deterring one from sins than other Names and Attributes. This is because *al-Ilāh huwal’ Mustahiq lil’ Ibādah* ‘the *Ilāh* (god) is One deserving of worship,’ and this can only be if He is powerful, knowledgeable and wise. As such, ‘I seek refuge in God,’ is like saying: ‘I seek refuge in the Powerful, Knowledgeable and Wise One,’

⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah *Iqāmat al-Dalīl ‘alā Ibṭāl al-Tahlīl* [Vol. 5, p. 359 (Shamela edition)]

⁹ Abdullah ibn ‘Abdar-Rahman Ibn Jibreel *al-Shahādatān Ma’nāhuma wa mā Tastalzimuhu kulla minhuma* [p. 10]. The phrasing used in English which now seems to have become commonplace is to delineate the meaning of the testimony of Islam as being – ‘There is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allah;’ at times abbreviated as ‘there is none worthy of worship.’ That interpretation is also woven in to verses and *ahādīth* which are marshalled as evidence. With reference to ‘Shaykh al-Islam’ – that is the euphemism almost always used for Ibn Taymiyyah.

and these Attributes are the ultimate in deterrence. This is so because a thief [for example] may know that the sultan is powerful, yet he steals from him anyway because he knows that, despite his power, the sultan lacks knowledge [i.e. of events around him]. This shows that power is not enough as a deterrent, but it requires knowledge alongside it. Even power and knowledge together are not enough, as the ruler might observe an evil but do nothing to discourage it, in which case his presence does nothing to prevent it. However, if power and knowledge are accompanied by the wisdom which prevents distasteful deeds, then full deterrence is achieved. Thus when the servant says ‘I seek refuge in Allah,’ it is as though he has said: ‘I seek refuge in the Powerful, Knowledgeable and Wise, Who does not accept any wrongdoing’ – and this would certainly deter him completely.¹⁰

Next, the following has been mentioned in *Tarjamat Shaykh Hāfiẓ Aḥmad Ḥakami*. Shaykh al-Hāfiẓ Aḥmad Ḥakami is regarded as a modern totem within the sect of Wahhābism:

The meaning of - *Lā 'ilāha 'illā Allah* is *Lā Ma'bud bi-Haqq*, '*illā Allah* - ‘There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah.’ *Lā 'ilāha*, denying everything that is worshipped besides Allah, so none deserves to be worshipped except Allah, affirming (that) worship for Allah. He is the true deity who deserves to be worshiped. The implied predicate of the omitted *Lā* means by right, which is conveyed by the texts of the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*, which we will outline by the will of Allah.

As for the matter of understanding ‘existing’ (or existent), it would be understood as *al-Ittiḥād* (union with the divine) so the *al-Ilāh huwal Ma'bud* – ‘the god/deity is the one who is worshipped.’ If it is said, ‘there is no existing deity worshipped except Allah,’ it would necessitate that every worshipped (is either) by right or in falsehood. Accordingly, what the *mushrikeen* worshipped, such as the sun, the moon, the stars, stones, angels, Prophets, saints, and other than that is Allah. Consequently, [worshiping anything from the previous list] would be considered *Tawheed*. No one is worshipped based on this

¹⁰ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 1, p. 84 (*Shamela* edition)]. See: Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzi - The Great Exegesis *al-Tafsir al-Kabir* Volume 1: The *Fātiha*, (2018), translated by Sohaib Saeed (The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge), [p. 142].

assessment except Allah, since it represents Him. This, Allah forbid, is the greatest and worst *Kufr* of all, and it leads to the invalidation of the messages of all the Messengers, disbelief of all the divine Books; denial of all the divine laws, and a purification of every disbeliever from being a disbeliever, since all the creatures that were worshipped is Allah, then whoever worshipped them is not considered a disbeliever - Exalted is Allah above the words of the wrongdoers and the deniers.¹¹

We would say, this viewpoint would imply by necessity without doubt, be that implicitly if not explicitly, that the following equations would apply. Namely, *Lā 'ilāha 'illā Allah = Lā Ma'bud bi-Haqq, 'illā Allah* - ‘There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah.’ Hence, a deity = worshipped by right. This, as it appears, is the doctrine of their late contemporary Imām, ‘Abd al-Aziz ibn Bāz. May Allah forgive him, he was content with quoting what Ibn Taymiyyah had put forth. Ibn Bāz said:

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him said: ‘The *Ilāh* is the One who is worshipped and obeyed; Allah is the deity, and the deity is the one deserving of worship. The fact that He is deserving of worship is due to the attributes He is characterized by, which necessitate Him to be: the beloved, the utmost of love; the One submitted to, the utmost submission.’ And he said: ‘The *Ilāh* is the beloved and the One who is worshipped, whom hearts deify with their love, submit to, humble themselves before Him, fear Him, hope in Him, turn to Him in their hardships, call upon Him in their interests, and seek refuge in Him. Their hearts find comfort by His remembrance, and find peace in His love. This is only for Allah alone, and this is why [saying] ‘there is no god but Allah alone’ is the most honest saying, and people who believe in it are the people of Allah and His party. As for those who deny this saying, they are Allah’s enemies and the people of His wrath and vengeance. Thus, if it is correct, every matter, condition, and taste are valid, and if the servant does not correct it, then his knowledge and deeds are necessary corrupted.¹²

¹¹ *Tarjamat Shaykh Hāfiẓ Aḥmad Ḥakami* [Vol. 9, p. 416]

¹² *Majmu' al-Fatāwa Samāḥa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Aziz Abdullāh ibn Bāz* [Vol. 6, p. 216 (*Shamela* edition)]

The aforementioned texts, especially those of Imām ibn Taymiyyah and the Imām’s who preceded him, such as al-Rāzi and in Ibn Sīdah, invalidate the widely used Wahhābi definition of the *al-Ilāh* which is: *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud* – ‘the god/deity is the one who is worshipped.’ The additional claim that this is somehow according to scholarly *ijmā’* (consensus) is a bare-faced lie, bordering on a great slander. Writing in his epistle entitled *Kalimat Lā ‘ilāha ‘illā Allah*, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW) said:

Know that *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud* (the god/deity is the one who is worshipped). This is the *Tafsir* of this word as per the *ijmā’* of the people of knowledge. Whoever worships something has taken it as a god besides Allah. And all of that is false, except for one *Ilāh* (God), and He is Allah alone, Blessed and Almighty.¹³

Similar appears in the work entitled ‘*Aqeedah al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Salafiyah wa Atharuhā fil’Alam al-Islamiy*:

Then the Shaykh said, answering some of those he addresses: So, consider, may Allah have mercy on you, this, and ask about the meaning of *al-Ilāh* as you ask about the meaning of the *al-Khāliq* (the Creator) and *al-Rāziq* (the Provider). And know that the meaning of *al-Ilāh* is the One who is worshipped, and this is the *Tafsir* of this word as per the *ijmā’* of the people of knowledge. Whoever worships something, has taken it as a god instead of Allah, and all of that is invalid, except for One God; He is Allah alone, the Blessed and Exalted.¹⁴

There are also two-further citations of note within his works where this appears:

And know that the meaning of *al-Ilāh* – *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud*. This is the *Tafsir* of this word as per the *ijmā’* of the people of knowledge. Whoever worships something, has taken it as a god instead of Allah,

¹³ MIAW *Kalimat Lā ‘ilāha ‘illā Allah*

¹⁴ ‘*Aqeedah al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Salafiyah wa Atharuhā fil’Alam al-Islamiy* [Vol. 1, p. 461]. Broadly rendered as: ‘The ‘*Aqeedah* (doctrine) of the Shaykh, MIAW: *Salafism* and its impact on the world of Islam.’

and all of that is invalid, except for One God; He is Allah alone, the Blessed and Exalted.¹⁵

It is an *ijmā’* among them that - *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud*. Contrary to what grave-worshippers and those like them believe in the meaning of Allah, that He is the Creator or capable of creation or similar expressions.¹⁶

You will also find it in *Bayān Kalimat al-Tawheed wa al-Rad ‘ala al-Kashmiri ‘Abd al-Mahmoud* by ‘Abdar-Rahman ibn Ḥassan ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb:

Also, the grammarians, the *ulemā’* (scholars), and the *mufasireen* (exegetes) among others, unanimously agreed that *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud*, and that Allah’s right [upon His servants] is to worship Him, and it is not permissible for anyone to worship anything besides Allah whatsoever, and that what is negated in *Kalimat al-Ikhlas* (The Statement of Sincerity) is that everything that is worshipped besides Allah, whether it is a human being, a king, a tree, a stone, or something else.¹⁷

I would argue here that ‘Abdar-Rahman ibn Ḥassan ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb repeated his grandfather’s lies about a purported *ijmā’* in the most heinous and impudent manner. Glory be to Allah! This is a great slander; like grandfather, like grandson! Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Shaykh said:

This is the commandment of Allah the Sublime to all Messengers and all people, ‘Worship none but Allah’ is equal to ‘There is no god but Allah.’ Hence, by equivalence, *al-Ilāh* becomes the one who is worshipped, and *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood) is *al-‘Ibādah*. *Lā ‘ilāha ‘illā Allah* meaning *Lā Ma’bud ‘illā Allah* (none is worshipped but Allah); meaning do not worship except Allah. The *mushrikeen* understood language and understood the meanings of speech in the time of

¹⁵ *al-Dorar al-Suniyyah fil’Ajwaba al-Najdiyyah* [Vol. 2, p. 71]

¹⁶ *Majmu’ Mu’allafāt Tārikh al-Rāfiḍah* [Vol. 46, p. 266]

¹⁷ Abdar-Rahman ibn Ḥassan ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb *Bayān Kalimat al-Tawheed wa al-Rad ‘ala al-Kashmiri ‘Abd al-Mahmoud* [printed within *Najdi Messages and Issues*, Part 4, p. 349].

Prophecy. When they were told to say *Lā 'ilāha 'illā Allah*, it was a call to embrace this statement. They understood that it meant abandoning all other gods/deities and not directing any of their actions towards any of those gods/deities.¹⁸

The words of Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz al ash-Shaykh about ‘equality’ or ‘equivalence’ between two sentences from the Qur’ān is a unique approach, and I do not think it was used before. However, he made a mistake here and reached an invalid conclusion, as we will explain in a separate chapter, among other serious Qur’ānic ‘equations.’ Even the renegade and heretic MIAW himself realised *some of this*, but the compounded ignorance or [evil] desires and stubbornness, or both, blinded him. So he did not complete the path and unsurprisingly, turned back on his heels, given that he was stubborn, heretic, extremist; he took his opinion seriously and considered it to be the absolute, certain truth. On the one hand, he was overconfident, claimed purity of soul and considered himself the best of the people of his time. On the other hand, he classified the rest of the people as *mushrik* and *kāfir*, so there was no person upon *Tawheed* left in this world - except him. Indeed, in his work *Kashf al-Shubuhāt* he said:

If you know that the meaning of ‘Allah’ is the *al-Ilāh* (the God), and you know that *al-Ilāh* is the One who is worshipped, then if you call upon Allah or sacrifice to Him or make a vow to Him, then you know that He is Allah. However, if you call upon a created being, whether good or evil, or sacrifice for them, or make a vow to them, you have claimed that they are god. Whoever took ‘Shamsan’ or ‘Taj’ as god for a short period of his life, knows what the children of Israel knew when they worshipped the (golden) calf; when it became clear to them, they were horrified and said what Allah mentioned about them – *When, with much wringing of hands, they perceived that they were doing wrong*.

¹⁸ Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz al ash-Shaykh, *Sharḥ Kashf al-Shubuhāt* [pp. 39/40]. The Arabic edition doesn’t carry this reference, only mentioning the following: ‘Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz al ash-Shaykh said [8/5].’ The excerpt quote is also accessible online via several websites including: <https://saleh.af.org.sa/sites/default/files/books/01_Kashf_AlShubuhat_Saalihi.pdf> and <<https://majles.alukah.net/showthread.php?t=200606>> (both Accessed 14 March 2025).

*they said, ‘If our Lord does not have mercy and forgive us, we shall be the losers,’ [7: 149].*¹⁹

It was mentioned in the *Tafsir* of *Surah’s al-Fātiḥah*, *al-Ikhlas* and *al-Mu’awwidhatayn*, by MIAW:

If you know that the meaning of ‘Allah’ is *al-Ilāh* (the God) and you know that *al-Ilāh* is the One who is worshipped, and then you call upon God or sacrifice to Him or make a vow to Him, then you know that He is Allah. If you call upon a good or evil creature, or sacrifice to him or make a vow to him, then you have claimed that he is ‘Allah.’²⁰

It is hardly surprising that the the renegade and heretic MIAW would turn back on his heels and go astray. He completely lacks knowledge in mechanical sciences, such as philology, mathematics, and logic - because it is as if he was saying, if not explicitly: ‘*Whoever practices logic practices ignorance*,’ – may Allah forbid that! As for the science of philosophy, according to him and his heretic and misguided innovative sect – these are all the evil handiwork of the devil, such as magic, astrology, and chemistry, Allah forbid that! Perhaps the Wahhābi’s sought help from what was presented in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari upon this matter:

Abu Ja’far said: As for the interpretation of Allah’s statement (Exalted is He) *Allah*, it has the meaning in accordance with that which was narrated to us from Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās: ‘He is the One whom everything serves and which every creature worships.’ And that to which Abu Kareeb narrated to us, he said Uthmān ibn Sa’eed narrated to us he said Bishr ibn Umārah narrated to us he said Abu Rawq narrated to us from al-Ḍaḥḥāk from Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās, he said: ‘Allah is the Possessor of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *al-Ubudiyyah* (the quality of being worshipped) above all of His creation.’ Thus, if someone says to us: does (the Name Allah) have a triliteral verbal root (*fa’ala/yaf’alu*) upon which this proper Name is based? It is said (in

¹⁹ MIAW *Kashf al-Shubuhāt* [Vol. 4, p. 16]

²⁰ MIAW *Tafsir* [p. 5].

reply): There is no indication that this (verb) has been heard (used) within the Arabic language, but by *istidlāl* (inference) it has one.

If it is said - what indicates that *al-Uluhiyyah* is *al-Ibadāh* and that *al-Ilāh* is the one is worshipped? And that (the Name Allah) has a triliteral verbal root? (In reply) it is said, there is no disagreement among Arabic speakers over the soundness of describing a person’s intense worship and quest for that which is with Allah, Exalted in His Remembrance, with the words – ‘So and so *ta’allaḥa*.’ An example of that is Ru’ba ibn al-Hajjāj (provided in *Rajaz* style):

‘The abundance of chaste beauties comes from Allah
Who glorify Him and say,
To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return
On account of my intense piety.’

By *ta’alluhi*, the poet means ‘my acts of worship and my quest for Allah in my deeds.’ There is no doubt that *ta’alluh* is the [Form V] verbal noun from the verb *alaha/ya’lahu* and that the meaning of *alaha*, were one to employ it would be ‘to worship Allah.’ The survival of the verbal noun (of *alaha*) is evidence that the Arabs used to employ the [Form I] verb of this root without any additional prefixes or suffixes. And that is what has been narrated to us as per:

Sufyān ibn Waki narrated to us he said Waki’ narrated to us he said my father narrated to us from Nāfi’ from Ibn Umar from ‘Amr ibn Dīnār from Ibn ‘Abbās that he read *Wa yadhraka wa Ilāhataka* (*forsake you and your gods*);²¹ he said: ‘*Ibadāhataka* - Worshipping you.’ He says: ‘(The Pharaoh) was worshipped but did not worship (any other).’

Sufyān narrated to us he said Ibn ‘Uyayna narrated to us from ‘Amr ibn Dīnār from Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Ḥasan from Ibn ‘Abbās

²¹ The reference here is to the verse at [7: 127], which in full reads as: *The leaders among Pharaoh’s people said to him, ‘But are you going to leave Moses and his people to spread corruption in the land and forsake you and your gods?’ He replied, ‘We shall kill their male children, sparing only the females: We have complete power over them.’* Here Professor Lucas (see next footnote for reference) has a footnote in his translation [p. 100] which reads: ‘The orthodox reading of this verse in the Qur’ān is *ālihataka*, instead of Ibn ‘Abbās’ *Ilāhataka*. The significance of this difference is that the reading of Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid is a verbal noun, which implies the existence of a verb based on the triliteral root ‘-l-h. The orthodox reading of *ālihataka* is not a verbal noun and thus does not support Tabari’s argument that the Name Allah is based on the trilateral root ‘-l-h.’

(regarding the verse) *Wa yadhraka wa Ilāhataka* (*forsake you and your gods*); he said: ‘Pharaoh was only worshipped and did not worship (any other).’

(Abu Ja’far al-Tabari) That is how Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid read this verse [as being *Ilāhataka* as opposed to the orthodox reading of *ālihataka*]. Al-Qāsim narrated to us he said al-Ḥussein ibn Dāwud narrated to us he said al-Ḥajjāj reported to me from Mujāhid concerning where He says - *Wa yadhraka wa Ilāhataka* (*forsake you and your gods*); he said: ‘And worshipping you.’

There is no doubt that *al-Ilāha*, as Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid have explained it, is the verbal noun from the statement ‘So-and-so worshipped (*alaha ilāhatan*) God,’ just as one says ‘So-and so worshipped (*‘abada ‘ibādatan*) God,’ or ‘So-and-so interpreted (*‘abara ‘ibāratan*) the vision.’ The statements of Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid make clear that the verb *alaha* means ‘*abada* - ‘to worship;’ and that *al-ilāha* is its verbal noun.²²

Given the above, I would argue as follows - Imām al-Tabari was deceived by all of these narrative channels which are purportedly from Ibn ‘Abbās. However, the *isnād*’s for these are highly problematic. Firstly, regarding the narrator Uthmān ibn Sa’eed, he is Uthmān ibn Sa’eed ibn Murrah al-Mari, and he is not well known or renowned. According to al-Ḥāfiẓ, he is *maqbul* (acceptable) only, that is to say his *ahādīth* are judged to be *daef* unless they are supported by parallel channels, but he does not have that parallel channel support here in this respect. Secondly, Bishr ibn Umārah al-Khath’ami al-Maktab al-Kufi, from among the *Kibbār Atbāh al-Tābi’een*, as narrated by Ibn Mājah in his *Tafsir*, yet he is graded by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar as *daef*. Lastly, regarding al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim al-Hilāli, Abul’Qāsim, also called Abu Muḥammad al-Khurāsāni, he is one of the *Ṣighār al-Tābi’een*. A series of Imām’s have narrated from him, including Abu Dāwud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasā’i and Ibn Mājah. His grading is *Ṣaduq* (truthful) and he is well known for *Tadlees* (misrepresentation in reporting), having a great deal of *irsāl*. Al-

²² *Tafsir al-Tabari* [Vol. 1, pp. 82/83 (print edition, Arabic)]. For the translated section we have utilised, albeit with some modification, the translation by Professor Scott Lucas from: *Selections from the Comprehensive Exposition of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur’ān*: Volume I, al-Tabari, Translated by Scott Lucas [The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge, 2017, pp. 99/100].

Dhahabi said *thiqa* (trustworthy) as per Ahmād and Ibn Ma’een; Shu’ba said ‘He was considered *daef* to us.’ Further to this, the following has been mentioned in *Jāmi’ al-Tahsīl fi Ahkām al-Marāsil*:

al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥīm al-Hilālī, one of the exegetes. Shu’ba denied that he had met Ibn ‘Abbās. It is narrated from Yunus ibn Ubayd that he said: ‘I didn’t ever see Ibn ‘Abbās.’ And (narrated) from al-Malik ibn Maysara, that he didn’t meet him, but he did meet Sa’eed ibn Jubayr in Rayy and took *Tafsīr* from him. Shu’ba also narrated from Mušāḥ that he said: ‘I asked al-Ḍaḥḥāk did he meet Ibn ‘Abbās and he replied no.’ Al-Athram said ‘I heard Ahmād ibn Ḥanbāl asking al-Ḍaḥḥāk did he meet Ibn ‘Abbās and he replied – I do not know.’ It was said, so who did he hear *al-Tafsīr* from? He said: ‘They said, he heard it from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr.’ It is said that he met Ibn Umar and Abu Sinān said ‘He narrates something which isn’t correct to me.’

I said, Abu Nu’aym was saying concerning Ḥākim ibn Dulaym from al-Ḍaḥḥāk he heard from Ibn Umar. Ahmād said, ‘He is nothing.’ I say, Abu Janāb al-Kalbī narrated, and it is *daef*, from al-Ḍaḥḥāk, that he said ‘I lived beside Ibn ‘Abbās for seven years; the first of the narratives are more authentic.’ Abu Zur’ā said ‘al-Ḍaḥḥāk from Ali, may Allah be pleased with him is *mursal*; he did not hear anything from Ibn Umar and neither from Ibn ‘Abbās.’ Abu Ḥātim said: ‘He wasn’t alive during the era of Abu Hurayrah, nor Abu Sa’eed, may Allah be pleased with him.’ Ibn Ḥibbān said: ‘As for the narrations from Abu Hurayrah and Ibn ‘Abbās and those narrating from him, all of that it is be considered, but he is more well-known for *Tafsīr*.²³

The following has also been mentioned in *Tadreeb al-Rāwi fi Sharḥ Taqreeb al-Nawwāwi*:

²³ *Jāmi’ al-Tahsīl fi Ahkām al-Marāsil* [no. 304, pp. 199/200]. Oddly enough, al-Ṭabarī has an earlier account in his *Tafsīr* prior to this where he notes explicitly the criticism levelled at whether al-Ḍaḥḥāk heard from Ibn ‘Abbās. In the introductory section to his *Tafsīr* he writes: ‘Mention of the reports concerning some of the *Salaf* who were among the first interpreters whose knowledge of *Tafsīr* was praised, and (details regarding) those whose knowledge of it was criticised.’ Thereafter he mentions the channel from Shu’ba: ‘And Ibn al-Muthannā narrated to us he said Abu Dāwud narrated to us from Shu’ba from Mušāḥ, he said – ‘I said to al-Ḍaḥḥāk, did you hear anything from Ibn ‘Abbās? He replied: No.’ see: *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* [Vol. 1, p. 62 (print edition)]

Narrated by Ibn Jarir (al-Ṭabarī) from the pathway of Bishr ibn Umārah from Abu Rawq from al-Ḍaḥḥāk from Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, he said ‘Allah is the Possessor of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *al-Ubudiyyah* (the quality of being worshipped) above all of His creation.’ As for *al-Rahmān*, it is the *fa’lān* nominal form derived from *al-Rahmā*; *al-Raheem* refers to being gentle, compassionate to those upon whom He wishes to show mercy, and being detached and severe upon those He wishes to deliver punishment upon. Bishr is *daef* and al-Ḍaḥḥāk did not hear from Ibn ‘Abbās.²⁴

Given the above, it is clear that the *isnād* is *sāqīt*, severely weakened and fallen. It therefore cannot be used as evidence at all. Hence, attributing the sentence ‘He is the Possessor of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *al-Ubudiyyah* (the quality of being worshipped) above all of His creation,’ upon the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās is not correct nor proven beyond reasonable doubt. Additionally, concerning the other sentence, ‘He is the One whom everything serves and which every creature worships,’ al-Ṭabarī did not mention an *isnād* for this. Rather, he mentioned this only in the form of *Sīghat al-Tamrīd* - ‘with that which was narrated to us from Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās’ – the indication here being that this is extremely weak.

To date, despite extensive searches, I have not been able to locate at all any *isnād* properly connected to Ibn ‘Abbās and carrying this reported wording. The statement itself, ‘He is the Possessor of *al-Uluhiyyah* and *al-Ubudiyyah* above all of His creation,’ is only to be found in the books of the Wahhābīs. But they remain stuck in mere attribution, as they cannot produce an *isnād* for this. Despite which, with arrogance and impudence, they stubbornly attribute it to Ibn ‘Abbās, arguing that ‘he said it,’ avoiding any mention of an *isnād* let alone a discussion of it. Naturally, it goes with their falsehood. Even the supposed masters of *Salafism*, *Multaqa Ahl-al-Hadīth* (an internet forum group) never mention an *isnād* for it.

Even if that sentence was proven on the authority of Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, it has no relation to our topic, rather it is an explanation of the Majestic Name – Allah, mentioning some of its requirements. It is not a strict, controlled definition of the Majestic Name –

²⁴ al-Suyūtī *Tadreeb al-Rāwi fi Sharḥ Taqreeb al-Nawwāwi* [Vol. 1, p. 50 (Shamela edition)]

Allah; *a fortiori*, it is not a strict, disciplined definition of the concept intended by the word *al-Ilāh*.

Consigned to history

Therefore, there is no escape from throwing the purported definition *al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud* – ‘the god/deity is the one who is worshipped,’ into the dustbin of history. It is not one of the ‘explanatory sayings’ or the precise ‘definitions’ because it is, in reality, one of the statements of *kufr* - disbelief, and this is the truth regardless of the definition of *al-Ibādah*, as it is sufficient only that it be from the sayings and actions of the servants, whether apparent or hidden, regardless of any other details. Accordingly, the expression ‘*al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud*,’ is nothing more than rhetorical. It mentions some of the matters related to *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and its requirements, and nothing else; or it refers to the linguistic origin, or something similar, or it is – at best, merely a matter of emphasis, as is the case with the infallible Prophetic speech. Examples here are outlined.

An example of what we mentioned concerning ‘emphasis,’ is where he, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Ḥuṣayn, father of ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn Khuzā’i – *Kam ta’budul Yawm Ilāhan*, ‘How many gods do you worship today?’ Ḥuṣayn al-Khuzā’i replied only by giving the number, ‘Seven: Six on earth and one in heaven.’²⁵ This is as if the question was: ‘how many gods / deities do you have?’ but the words of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, are more eloquent and dispel any illusion that the

²⁵ The *hadith* of al-Ḥuṣayn al-Khuzā’i has been recorded by Imām al-Tirmidhi in his collection of *Sunan* [Vol. 5, no. 3483]. The *isnād* is judged to be *hasan*. Aḥmad ibn Muneeh narrated to us Abu Mu’āwiya narrated to us from Shabeeb ibn Shabeeba from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn, he said - the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said to his father: *O Ḥuṣayn, how many gods do you worship today?* My father replied ‘Seven: Six on earth and one in heaven.’ He said: *So which of them do you take for your ardent requests and fears?* He replied: ‘The one above the heavens.’ He said: *O Ḥuṣayn, if you would but accept Islam, I would teach you two phrases that would benefit you.* He said – upon embracing Islam he enquired – ‘O Messenger of Allah, teach me the two phrases that you promised me.’ So he (the Prophet) said: *Say: Allāhumma alihinnī rushdī, wa a’idhnī min sharri nafṣī.* ‘*O Allah, inspire me with my guidance, and protect me from the evil of my soul.*’ Abu Esa (al-Tirmidhi) said: ‘This *hadith* is *ghareeb*. The *hadith* has been narrated from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn from an alternate pathway (of reporting).’ I would argue that it is *Ṣaḥīḥ* from its channels of reporting. The narrator, Shabeeb ibn Shabeeba is al-Tamimi al-Munqari, Abu Ma’mar al-Baṣri, the eloquent orator and truthful reporter as per *Taqreeb* [Vol. 1, no. 2740]. Other Imām’s have included this in their collections, like al-Ṭabarāni in *Mu’jam al-Kabeer* [Vol. 18, no. 396] and *al-Awsat* [Vol. 2, p. 281]

word *Ilāh* may have had multiple meanings among the people of Ḥuṣayn, as is the case with the word *Rabb* among the Arabs in general. It seems that this was rare among the Arabs, unlike the Children of Israel who were lenient with the meaning and sometimes used ‘Eloah’ and ‘Elohim’ to refer to the ‘dominant, controlling master,’ or the ‘respected master of high status,’ in addition to the main use of ‘supernatural’ beings. An example of this is describing Moses as ‘Elohim’ to Pharaoh in Exodus (7:1), and also to Aaron in Exodus (4:16). Those texts have previously been cited, and others, as they are in their Hebrew language. Another example, but on another topic: Imām al-Bukhāri included in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, as did Imām Muslim, the following *hadith*:

حدثنا أمية بن بسطام حدثنا يزيد بن زريع عن روح عن عبد الله بن طلوس عن أبيه عن بن عباس عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أحقوا الفرائض بأهلها فما تركت الفرائض فلأولى رجل ذكر

Umaya ibn Bisṭām narrated to us Yazeed ibn Zureeh’ narrated to us from Rawḥ from Abdullaḥ ibn Ṭāwus from his father from Ibn ‘Abbās from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Give the Farā’id (the shares of the inheritance those who are entitled to receive it; and whatever is left should be given to the closest male relative of the deceased).*²⁶

The Prophet’s saying here of a *rajul dhakar* (a man, who is male) – normally appearing in translations as being a ‘male relative,’ is for emphasis. Some Arabs may have used the word *rajul* – man, to mean *insān* - human beings; or *adami*, or even *shaqs* (person), which could extend to angels and *Jinn*. Conversely, as *Ṣannāt al-Arab*, A’sha Qays said: ‘Allah has taken loyalty and justice for Himself and has left the blame unto man.’ In other words, meaning, the human being, male or female; although this is rare, unlike European languages where this is common.

²⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 6, no. 6365]; *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 3, no. 1615] who reports the same but where Rawḥ is mentioned he reported it as Rawḥ ibn al-Qāsim. The Arabic edition provides for more than thirty additional references for this tradition, as it is cited across the entire corpus appearing in collections of *Sunan*, *Musnad* and other *Ṣaḥīḥ* works.

8. God is worshipped by right?

Is the notion of the *Ilāh* (deity) worshipped by right? Phrased in Arabic as ‘*al-Ilāh huwal’Ma’bud bi-Haqq*.’ Regarding the following statements by Shaykh al-Hāfiẓ Ahmad Ḥakamī and latterly, Ibn Taymiyyah:

الله = معبود بحق

Ilāh = rightfully worshipped

اللهُ هُوَ الْمَعْبُودُ الَّذِي يَسْتَحِقُ أَنْ يُبَدَّ

The God is the one who deserves to be worshiped

فَإِنَّ إِلَهَهُ هُوَ الْمَعْبُودُ الَّذِي يَسْتَحِقُ أَنْ يُبَدَّ

God is the One who is worshipped, deserving of worship.¹

Even if it is possible to escape from the difficulties arising from the implications of these statements, coupled with the phrasing of *Tawheed* - that ‘there is no god except Allah,’ it doesn’t address matters pertaining to *Hulool*, *Ittiḥād* or *Wahdat al-Wujud*. However, it does not solve the issue that ‘Allah’, May His Majesty be glorified, would not be considered a god in pre- eternity, nor divinity His attribute at all, nor is there any sense in calling Him *al-Ilāh* – the Deity at all. All of that is outright *kufr*. Moreover, following this line of reasoning, would entail questioning the credibility of the Qur’ān, leveling the accusation of contradiction against it. This is because it has called some of

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah *al-Fatawā’ al-Kubra* [Vol. 5, p. 252 (print edition)]

the *Aṣnām* (idols) of the *mushrikeen* ‘gods,’ although they are falsely worshipped. Again, this is clear and absolute *kufr*. This is true regardless of the definition of ‘*Ibādah*, as it is sufficient for worship to consist of the outer or inner words and acts of the servants, regardless of any accompanying specific details.

9. Is God worthy of worship?

There are some who would argue that the statements made, and quoted in the previous chapter, from al-Rāzi and Ibn Taymiyyah, fundamentally resolve the issue, particularly Ibn Taymiyyah's formulation of *al-Ilāh huwal' Mustaḥiqq lil'Ibādah* – ‘the *Ilāh* is the One deserving of worship.’¹ Let us first consider the following. In his *Tafsir* al-Rāzi says:

Fourth: some have said that *Ilāh* is not simply the object of worship but in fact *al-Ilāh huwal' alladhi yastaḥiqqu 'an yakuna ma'budān* - ‘the *Ilāh* is the one who deserves to be worshipped (*sic.* or deserving of worship).’ However, this too faces the objection that He would not be the *Ilāh* of objects, beasts, children and the insane, nor would He have been *Ilāh* in pre-eternity. [A third opinion] is that it means ‘capable of such acts which would make Him deserving of worship from such as can perform it.’ Know that the first two opinions mean that He was not *Ilāh* in pre-eternity, whereas He was indeed *Ilāh* in pre-eternity according to the third.²

¹ Deriving from the [Form X] verb *istahaqqa* [سْتَحْقَّ], ‘to deserve,’ or ‘to be worthy,’ the active participle being *mustaḥiqq* [مُسْتَحْقَّ]. The commonplace translation of the Islamic testimony of faith is routinely expressed as beginning with ‘there is none worthy of worship,’ following this verb pattern, which isn’t an accurate translation or rendition.

² *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. p. 1, p. 165 (print edition)]. Here we have utilised the English translation, albeit modified, by Dr Saeed. See: Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzi - The Great Exegesis *al-Tafsir al-Kabir* Volume 1: The *Fātiha*, (2018), translated by Sohaib Saeed (The Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge) [p. 247].

In response to that, we would argue that broadly, there are three-interpretations to which Imām al-Rāzi sets out. The first of which, is *al-Ilāh 'Ibāra 'anil-Ma'bud* - ‘*al-Ilāh* is that which is worshipped.’ Following that, the second is - *al-Ilāh huwal' alladhi yastaḥiqqu 'an yakuna ma'budān*, ‘the *Ilāh* is the One who deserves to be worshipped.’ Lastly, that upon which al-Rāzi seems to have settled upon is ‘The one capable of performing actions that, if done, would make them deserving of worship from those who are capable of worshiping.’ As set out in previous chapters, there are problems underpinning all of this. Moreover, al-Rāzi also says in his *Tafsir*:

Some of them said: ‘*al-Ilāh huwal' Ma'bud*; yet this is mistaken for two-reasons. The first of which, that He the Almighty was (already) *al-Ilāh* in pre-eternity and was not worshipped; secondly, that He the Almighty confirmed in the text of the Qur’ān that there are others which are worshipped, by His saying: ‘*You [disbelievers] and what you worship instead of Allah will be fuel for Hell: that is where you will go*,’ [21: 98]. The one capable of performing actions that, if done, would make them deserving of worship from those who are capable of worshiping.³

Further to this, as already quoted earlier, the following has been mentioned in Ibn Sīdah's *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ*:

Furthermore, it was said: ‘the *Ilāh* is the One deserving of worship,’ and it was also said: ‘He is the One who is Capable of what worship necessitates.’ Whoever claims that the meaning of *Ilāh* is the same as *Ma'bud* (worshipped) has erred, and the Qur’ān and the *Shari'ah* of Islam testify against his error, because all of that proves that ‘there is no god but Allah alone who has no partner.’⁴

³ Ibid. [Vol. 7, pp. 6/7 (print edition)]. Here we have edited the quote slightly to include the full verse in translation; al-Rāzi abbreviated that to only: ‘*You and what you worship instead of Allah*’

⁴ Ibn Sīdah *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* [Vol. 7, p. 747 (print edition, 2006)]. Here the Professor re-quotes in full the original quote set out by Ibn Sīdah from chapter 7. This has been abbreviated down to only the portions originally highlighted.

Taking all of this together, it is clear that utilising any of the following sentences like - *al-Ilāh huwal’ Mustahiq li'l'Ibādah* – ‘the *Ilāh* is the One deserving of worship,’ or *al-Ilāh huwal-ladhi yastahiq an yakun ma’būdan*, ‘the *Ilāh* is the One who deserves to be worshipped’ is inadequate. Both these, or others deriving from them remain invalid. Such definitions necessarily and inevitably entail that Allah the Almighty was somehow not *al-Ilāh* – the God/Deity in pre-eternity. Clearly this is a manifest statement of *kufr*. Secondly, that He the Exalted would somehow not be construed as *al-Ilāh* of inanimate objects; the breadth of animals and other creation, or even children under the age of reasoning and those lacking mental capacity. The argument being, that they cannot perform ‘acts of worship,’ regardless of how one defines that or details its components. Yet children under the age of reasoning and those lacking mental capacity are all from the progeny of Adam – hence they constitute ‘people’ or being from ‘mankind’ in general, thereby coming within scope of the explicit wording in the Qur’ān, namely:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ، مَالِكِ النَّاسِ، إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

*Say, ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of people, the Controller of people, the *Ilāh* (God) of people.⁵*

Claiming otherwise would be to stand in opposition to the manifest revealed truth, thereby constituting a lie and falsehood. That too, is clear disbelief. May Allah protect us from lies, falsehood and all forms of *Shirk* and *kufr*.⁶

⁵ Qur’ān, 114: 1/3

⁶ As one should be able to discern from this and the previous chapters, predicated the existence of God upon the notion of creation worshipping Him has caused immense confusion. Stated differently, the blurring of the concept of *Ibādah* (worship) into the definition of *al-Ilāh* has caused many scholarly blunders giving the impression that the existence of a deity itself is predicated upon the notion of worship – without which, a deity would not exist.

10. What actually is ‘worship’?

After thoroughly discussing the concept of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity), it is necessary to briefly touch upon the concept of *al-’Ibādah* - worship, whether defined with the definite article ‘*al*’ or in the constructed state as in ‘*Ibādat Allah*’ - worship of Allah, or ‘*Ibādat al-’Uzza*, worship of al-’Uzza. Essentially, this involves examining *al-’Ibādah* in its core essence. This concise treatment is essential due to the close intellectual connection between the two concepts: the concept of *al-Uluhiyyah* and the concept of *al-’Ibādah*. As for the detailed discussion of religious rituals, acts of devotion, and acts of veneration and sanctification, which jurists term ‘*Ibādāt*’ (pl. acts of worship) and ‘*Ibādah*’ as a singular act of worship, in an indefinite form, it is important to note that this terminology is rather unfortunate and unsuitable. Such a detailed discussion merits a separate section entirely.

Linguistically, *al-’Ibādah* is a verbal noun derived from ‘*abada, ya’budu, ibādah*’ [عبد يعبد عبادة] to denote the matter of ‘worship.’ It follows the pattern of *kataba, yaktubu, kitābah* [كتب يكتب كتابة] which denotes to write, with the verbal noun being ‘writing.’ In its original linguistic sense, it means humility, submission, compliance, and obedience. This is evident in the phrase ‘*tarīq mu’abbad*’ [طريق معبد] (a paved road), meaning a path that is smoothed and prepared. Similarly, when we say ‘*fulān ‘abd li-fulān*’ (so-and-so is a slave to so-and-so), it implies that he is owned as a possession, under the authority and command of the owner. Thus, the original linguistic meaning is *al-Tadhallul wa-l-Khudu wal-Inqiyād wa-t-tā’ah* [التذلل والخضوع والانقياد والطاعة] - humility, submission, compliance, and obedience. This original linguistic meaning, which encompasses the notions of submission and surrender, is solely

intended in expressions such as ‘*fulān ‘abd mamlūk li-fulān*’ (so-and-so is a slave owned by so-and-so). It has no connection to the concepts of *Shirk* and *Tawheed* in their respective legal or *Shari’ah* senses. Although Islamic law discourages the use of the terms ‘*abd* (slave) and ‘*amah* (female slave) for possessions, preferring instead the terms *fatā* (young man) and *fatāh* (young woman), as will be discussed in its appropriate context. This linguistic meaning is also intended in the famous Prophetic statement:

تَعْسَ عَبْدُ الدِّينَارِ، تَعْسَ عَبْدُ الدِّرْهَمِ، تَعْسَ عَبْدُ الْخَمِيسَةِ

‘*Perished is the slave of the dinar, perished is the slave of the dirham, perished is the slave of the luxurious garment.*’¹

Undoubtedly this illustrates the eloquence of Prophetic speech, as he likened the one overcome by the love of wealth and goods to a humiliated owned slave who has no control over his affairs and cannot escape the authority of his master. This has no relation to the matter of *Shirk* and *Tawheed*, being discussed in this present context, even though a person in such a state is deserving of condemnation and punishment from Allah. However, it is certain that this is not in the same category as ‘*Abd al-Lāt*,’ the slave of al-Lāt, ‘*Abd al-‘Uzza*,’ the slave of al-‘Uzza, or ‘*Abd al-Manāt*,’ the slave of Manāt. This original linguistic meaning is of little consequence and negligible utility in our discussion—just as the original linguistic meaning of the term *Ilāh* – god/deity, was of little consequence and negligible utility - if we aim to understand the meaning of ‘*Ibādah*’ as it was instinctively understood by the eloquent Arabs during the time of the revelation of the Qur’ān, before the corruption of the Arabic tongue and the spread of grammatical errors, and before the confusion introduced by the terminologies of legal jurists and theologians who disrupted the original instinctive meaning.

That much is clearly evident in their discussions about ‘*Alihah*’ [الْأَلْهَةِ] gods, ‘*Arbāb*’ [لِأَرْبَابِ] lords, *Deen* and ‘*Tadayyun*’ [الْتَّدِيْنِ] religiosity. An example being where He the Exalted said: ‘*We only worship them because*

¹ The tradition is widely reported across the corpus of *ahādīth*, appearing in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, narrated by Abu Hurayrah. The Arabic word ‘*al-Khamīṣah*’ can be rendered into English with quite a number of synonyms including, a) luxurious garment; b) rich robe, c) expensive cloak, and d) an elegant shawl. For the present translation, we have opted for (a).

they bring us nearer to Allah,’ [39: 3]. It is also in the saying ‘*ahl al-Ṭā’if ya ‘budūna al-Lāt*,’ the people of Ṭā’if worship al-Lat, and in their saying: ‘*al-Naṣārā ya ‘budūna al-Masīh*,’ - the Christians worship Christ. This understanding was also instinctively grasped by the *Ṣaḥāba* and their successors, the *Tābi’een*, as illustrated in the narration attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, where he reported: ‘*The habitual wine-drinker, if he dies, will meet Allah akin to a worshipper of a wathn (idol).*’²

The Arab *mushrik* would honour the guest and slaughter livestock for them, calling this ‘*qarā*’ hospitality and ‘*diyāfah*’ guest service, but he would not call this ‘*Ibādah*. However, he would call the slaughtering of livestock for Allah or for other idols such as al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt, ‘*Ibādah*. This was not only the understanding of the pure Arabs during the time of the revelation of the Qur’ān, but also the understanding of all nations and peoples up to the present time. Similarly, the eloquent Arab would differentiate between standing in reverence for the tribal leader and standing in reverence for some of his deities, calling the latter ‘*Ibādah*’ but not the former. This is, in fact, the nature of humanity in general, not just the eloquent pure Arabs. The Arabs in general, and the Quraysh in particular, revered the *Ka’ba* and the Black Stone, but it was never reported that they called them ‘*Alihah*,’ gods or deities. This instinctive original meaning used when speaking about ‘*Alihah*’ gods, ‘*Arbāb*’ lords, *Deen* and ‘*Tadayyun*’ religiosity, is necessarily the *only* meaning used by the Qur’ān in the countless verses such as:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ

*I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me.*³

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمْرٌ إِلَّا
تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

All those you worship instead of Him are mere names you and your forefathers have invented, names for which Allah has sent down no sanction. Authority belongs to Allah alone, and He orders you to worship none but Him: this is the

² For example as recorded in the *Musnad* of Ahmad: ‘Aswad ibn ‘Aāmir narrated to us al-Hasan, that is Ibn Ṣāliḥ narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir he said it is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said.’ Ibn Mājah records a similar tradition in his *Sunan* but narrated upon the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

³ *Qur’ān*, 51: 56

true faith, though most people do not realise it.⁴

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ لَا تَغْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدِينِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَنْلَفِعُ عِنْدَكُمُ الْكِبِيرُ أَحْدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَّاهُمَا فَلَا تَنْهَى لَهُمَا أَفْتِ
وَلَا تُنْهِرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully.⁵

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمُؤْتَذِ قَالَ لَبْنَيْهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكُمْ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

Were you there to see when death came upon Jacob? When he said to his sons, ‘What will you worship after I am gone?’ they replied, ‘We shall worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, one single God: we devote ourselves to Him.’⁶

قُلْ أَتَغْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْغَلِيمُ

Say, ‘How can you worship something other than Allah, that has no power to do you harm or good? Allah alone is the All Hearing and All Knowing.’⁷

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ, إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ, قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَنْتَنَا مَا فَنَّذْلَ لَهَا عَاكِفِينَ

Tell them the story of Abraham, when he asked his father and his people, ‘What do you worship?’ They said, ‘We worship idols, and are constantly in attendance on them.’⁸

Here I would hasten to add following these verses, to provide some additional clarification. The discussion as it pertains to this chapter is solely about the concept of ‘Ibādah – worship, in its innate original sense, when discussing the matter of gods, lords, *Deen* and the matter of religion. This is the sense in which directing worship to any other than Allah leads to *kufr* and major *Shirk*, which is the antithesis of Islam, taking one outside of the fold. Hence, the

⁴ Qur’ān, 12: 40

⁵ Qur’ān, 17: 23

⁶ Qur’ān, 2: 133

⁷ Qur’ān, 5: 76

⁸ Qur’ān, 26: 69/71

discussion is *not* focused upon the words or expressions of artists, be they poets, writers or musicians who would express ‘such and such loves so and so to the point of worship.’ This is despite the vileness of such an expression.

Secondly, outside the scope of discussion is the matter of the love for wealth that makes a person its ‘slave.’ While naturally being a matter which is deserving of criticism and censure, it is not necessarily within the domain deserving the label of *Shirk* or *kufr* per se. As already mentioned, this has been eloquently expressed by the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him himself in the famous tradition: ‘*Perished is the slave of the dinar, perished is the slave of the dirham, perished is the slave of the luxurious garment.*’ He, peace and blessings be upon him, further clarified the state of this unfortunate individual, saying, ‘*If he is given something, he is pleased, but if he is denied, he becomes angry.*’ He concluded by supplicating against him for lack of success: ‘*May he be wretched and overturned; if he is pricked by a thorn, may it not be removed.*’ This *dua’* (supplication) bears no resemblance, be that close or far, to what is deserved by the people of *Shirk* and *kufr*, nor is his condition like the descriptions given of the states of the people within those two-categories.

The fact that the linguistic root is of little substance, lacking utility, and may even be harmful to consider in our discussion becomes abundantly clear when we observe that words corresponding to the Arabic term ‘*Ibādah*’ in other languages may originate from linguistic roots with meanings that are subtly different from the Arabic trilateral root [ع ب د] from which the word is composed. For example, the English word ‘worship’ originates from a root conveying meanings that are related to honour and reverence:

Worship: (transitive) to show profound religious devotion and respect to; adore or venerate (God or any person or thing considered divine) - [Old English *worlscip*, *wurldscip* (Anglian), *weorlscipe* (West Saxon) ‘condition of being worthy, honor, renown,’ from *weord* ‘worthy’ (see worth) + -scipe (see -ship). Sense of ‘reverence paid to a supernatural or divine being,’ is first recorded c.1300. The original sense is

preserved in the title worshipful (c.1300).⁹

Here the linguistic root has been preserved for example by the people of Scotland, when they address a dignitary, such as a mayor, sheriff (magistrate) with the title of ‘Your Worship,’ or ‘The Worshipful.’ The derived meaning clearly being related to a matter of being honourable and revered. Looking at the matter from an alternate perspective, clearly there isn’t any doubt when discussing matters related to religion and religiosity, gods and lords, devotion and sanctification, and similar concepts under this rubric, the word ‘*Ibādah* - worship, or its equivalents in other languages, evidently has a meaning that is inherently understood. It is grasped linguistically and innately by way of sensory perception and reason. Naturally, such an understanding exists inevitably, even before the advent of divine laws, at least in its essential and general sense. Otherwise, the statement which was made by all the Messengers sent by Allah to their respective people, ‘*Worship no one but Allah*,’ [11: 2] would be meaningless and devoid of significance. That is similar to the following verses where He the Exalted and Majestic says:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ، أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ الْيَمِينِ، فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا نَرَاكُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا يَتَعَلَّمُ وَمَا نَرَى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بِلَّ نَظُنُّكُمْ كَاذِبِينَ

We sent Noah to his people to say, ‘I have come to you to give a clear warning: worship no one but God. I fear you will have torment on a painful Day.’ But the prominent disbelievers among his people said, ‘We can see that you are nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and it is clear to see that only the vilest

⁹ Dictionary entries for this include the following – *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (2024), [5th edition, p. 856], (Dallas: PA), which reads: ‘[ME *worshipe* worthiness, respect, reverence paid to a divine being. OE *weorthscipe* worthiness, respect, fr. *wearth* worth, worth + -scipe -ship.

1 Chiefly Brit: a person of importance – used as a title for officials 2: reverence toward a divine being or supernatural power; *also*: the expression of such reverence 3: extravagant respect or admiration or devotion <of the dollar> *worship-ful adj* 1 *archaic* : Notable distinguished 2 *chiefly Brit* – used as a title for various persons or groups of rank or distinction.’ An earlier edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), (2010), [3rd ed. p. 2046] (Oxford University Press: Oxford) records the entry as: ‘worship – noun 1 [mass noun] the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity: *worship of the Mother Goddess*. 2 [as title] (His/Your Worship) *chiefly Brit.* used in addressing or referring to an important or high-ranking person, especially a magistrate or mayor.’

among us follow you. We cannot see how you are any better than we are. In fact, we think you are a liar.’¹⁰

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذِرْنَاهُمْ صَاعِدَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِدَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ، إِذْ جَاءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
إِلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ قَالُوا لَنْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَنَ مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْنَا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

If they turn away, say, ‘I have warned you about a blast like the one which struck Ad and Thamud: when their messengers came to them, from all angles, saying, ‘Serve no one but God,’ they said, ‘If our Lord had wished, He would have sent down angels. We do not believe in the message with which you have been sent.’¹¹

وَادْكُرْ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَخْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النَّارُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدِيهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ إِلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْنَمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ، قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِتَأْفِكُنَا عَنِ الْهَتَنَا فَأَتَنَا بِمَا تَعْدَنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ، قَالَ إِنَّمَا
الْعَلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَبْلَغْنَمْ مَا أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَلَكُنِي أَرَأْكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُونَ

Mention [Hud] of the tribe of Ad: he warned his people among the sand dunes - other warners have come and gone both before and after him – ‘Worship no one but God: I fear for you, that you will be punished on a terrible Day,’ but they said, ‘Have you come to turn us away from our gods? If what you say is true, bring down that punishment you threaten us with!’ He said, ‘Only God knows when it will come: I simply convey to you the message I am sent with but I can see you are an insolent people.’¹²

The fact that the term ‘*Ibādah*’ has a known meaning in the language, instinctively understood by necessity of perception and reason, without doubt, before the advent of the divine laws is certain and undeniable. Otherwise, the people would have immediately and instinctively said, ‘What is this term *ta’budū*? We do not know it at all.’ However, the sensory reality, historical continuity, and the decisive texts of the Qur’ān indicate that they understood it and recognised the intended meaning immediately, with many of them hastening to denounce and protest:

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِتَأْفِكُنَا عَنِ الْهَتَنَا فَأَتَنَا بِمَا تَعْدَنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ

¹⁰ *Qur’ān*, 11: 25/27

¹¹ *Qur’ān*, 41: 13/14

¹² *Qur’ān*, 46: 21/23

But they said, ‘Have you come to turn us away from our gods? If what you say is true, bring down that punishment you threaten us with!’¹³

قَلُواْ يَا هُوْدٌ مَا جِئْنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِ الْهَبَّةِ عَنْ قُولَكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

They replied, ‘Hud, you have not brought us any clear evidence. We will not forsake our gods on the strength of your word alone, nor will we believe in you.’¹⁴

أَجْعَلُ الْأَلْهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ

‘How can he claim that all the gods are but one God? What an astonishing thing [to claim]!’¹⁵

The people's response indicates that they understood immediately and instinctively the content of the Prophetic message being sent to their people, ‘*al-Lā Ta 'budū illā Allah*,’ that you do not worship except Allah, actually meant, in elaborate detail:

- Believe us: All your gods - except Allah - are but fictional beings created by the imagination, with no real existence; and if some of them have any existence, they are not ascribed the falsely imagined attributes you believe in. Therefore, reject all these lies completely and acknowledge the certain truth - that there is no god but Allah, and submit to this true God.
- Or, placed more succinctly - Do not attribute any divinity to anyone other than Allah at all
- Or, - Bear witness to the truth - there is no god but Allah.

The people understood that this was the great calamity, the complete antithesis, and the total demolition of their inherited beliefs, as it necessitated the invalidation of their ‘gods,’ since they do not exist by themselves or with the attributes ascribed to them, which requires abandoning them, indeed rejecting and disavowing them, i.e., disbelieving in them!

Thus, *Ibādah*, the worship of something in its essence and reality is nothing but attributing any divinity to that thing; or in broader terms: *Ibādah*

¹³ *Qur'ān*, 46: 22

¹⁴ *Qur'ān*, 11: 53

¹⁵ *Qur'ān*, 38: 5

is simply attributing divinity, if our understanding of the people's denial of their Prophets and our estimation of the Prophetic message to their people is correct, which is highly likely. However, reaching this to the degree of certainty and conviction, leaving no doubt or ambiguity, requires additional evidence and the further refinement and clarification of what has previously been mentioned. This will be accomplished in the following chapters, by the permission of Allah.

Given the foregoing analysis, the meaning of *Ibādah* is not as ambiguous as it was erroneously perceived by the contemporary scholar ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yaḥyā al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamānī, who made a grave error when he said in the introduction to his book ‘*Raf‘ al-Ishtibāh ‘an Ma‘nā al-‘Ibādah wa-al-Ilāh*,’

For I have pondered the widespread disagreement among the *Ummah* in later centuries regarding seeking assistance from righteous dead people, venerating their graves and shrines, and venerating some living scholars, with some of the *Ummah* claiming that much of this is *Shirk*, some that it is *bid‘ah*, and some that it is part of the truth. I have seen many people who have engaged in venerating the stars, spirits, and *Jinn* in ways too extensive to detail, some of which are found in books on astrology and summoning spirits like ‘*Shams al-Ma‘ārif*’ and others. I realised that no Muslim would engage in what he knows to be *Shirk*, nor would he declare a non-believer someone he knows to be a believer. However, the disagreement arose over the reality of *Shirk*.

So I looked into the reality of *Shirk* and found that it is, by agreement - taking a deity other than Allah, or worshipping other than Allah. Thus, the focus turned to the meaning of *al-Ilāh* [الله] god/deity and ‘*Ibādah*’ [العبادة] worship, and I found there to be great ambiguity in the meaning of worship; what is known about (the nature of) the interpretation of *Ilāh* is their saying, *ma‘bud* – worshipped, or *ma‘bud bi-haqq* - worshipped by right, as you will see, Allah willing. I realised that this ambiguity is the cause of the disagreement, and that the danger is greater than anticipated; for ignorance of the meaning of deity necessitates ignorance of the meaning of the *Shahādah* - there is no god but Allah, which is the foundation of Islam and the foundation of all true divine laws before it. Allah the Exalted said: ‘We never sent any

Messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: ‘There is no god but Me, so serve Me,’ [21: 25].¹⁶

In the introduction to his book *Nukhbat al-Fawā’id min al-Uṣūl wa-al-Qawā’id* he said:

I have compiled a treatise investigating the meaning of *al-Ibādah* - worship and *al-Ilāh*, god/deity, to clarify the meaning of the wording of *Tawheed* – ‘there is no god but Allah,’ and to elucidate what constitutes deification and worship of others besides Allah the Almighty and *Shirk* with Him, and what does not. I tried to comprehensively examine this matter.¹⁷

The method of investigation is to look at what those people believed regarding these things and how they venerated them. When this becomes clear to us, we know that this belief and veneration is deification and worship.¹⁸

It is unfortunate that this virtuous man and meticulous scholar succumbed to the Wahhābi falsehoods that made *Ibādah* the primary concept and *al-Uluhiyyah* secondary to it. He was thus misled by false and incorrect interpretations: ‘A deity is the one who is worshipped,’ or ‘A deity is the one who is rightly worshipped.’ No wonder then that he stumbled into thinking that ‘the meaning of worship is very ambiguous,’ because he repeatedly fell into the subtle circular reasoning, and felt compelled to determine the reality of *Shirk* in which previous nations had fallen, and to examine the states of the people to whom the prophets were sent by Allah. For Allah ascribes *Shirk* to them in every context. Consequently, he delved into establishing principles and details, studying and discussing - over approximately 600 pages of his book which is entitled: ‘*Raf’ al-Ishtibāh ‘an Ma’nā al-‘Ibādah wa-al-Ilāh*,’ to overcome this alleged ambiguity. He had no other aim but to hasten to good deeds; however, his sinister Wahhābi background broke his back, and he could only move forward slowly, causing him to fall into significant errors, some of

¹⁶ *Athār al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Mu’allimī* [pp. 2/3 (Shamela edition)]. Broadly the translation for the title of the work as mentioned prior to the quote is: ‘Clarifying the Ambiguity Regarding the Meaning of Worship and God/deity.’

¹⁷ Ibid. [Vol. 2, pp. 13/14]

¹⁸ Ibid. [Vol. 2, pp. 24/25]

which were previously mentioned in the earlier chapters, and more will be mentioned later. Truly, we belong to Allah, and truly, to Him we shall return.

There is no doubt that Shaykh al-Mu’allimī was aware from the outset of the danger of the circular reasoning in the definition of *Ilāh*, god/deity, and he himself explicitly mentioned it. Therefore, he attempted to escape it in an astonishing manner: by claiming that the term *Ilāh* applies to two distinct types: the first being *al-Ma’bud*, the worshipped, and the second being *al-Ma’būd bi-Haqq*, ‘the rightly worshipped,’ or worshipped by right. However, as we shall see soon, Allah willing, in a separate chapter, he did not succeed in escaping the circular reasoning.

11. Equations established from the Qur'an

In the previous volume of this series, we set out a series of *ahādīth* including that of the famous *ḥadīth* of Jibrel - 'Islam is built upon five,' as well as the Prophetic advice given to the Companion Mu'ādh ibn Jabal upon his departure to Yemen, and many others. Therein, it has been established to a very good threshold of certainty and conviction, that with the variety of words and expressions used in these sentences, they are, stemming from the infallible revelation sent to the finality of Prophethood, the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As previously noted, we elucidated the following equation which expressed the complete conformity of meaning for the sentences that were reported from these *ahādīth*, notwithstanding variance, namely:

Equation 1

شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله = عبادة الله ومعرفته = عبادة الله والكفر بما دونه =
عبادة الله غير مشرك به شيئاً = توحيد الله

Testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah
=

Worshipping Allah and knowing Him

=

Worshipping Allah and disbelieving in what is beside Him

=

Worshipping Allah, not associating anything with Him

=

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Tawheed (Oneness) of Allah.

And we are able to reach more certain truths, in addition to confirming the correctness of the aforementioned equation until we arrive upon the degree of absolute certainty and firm conviction, by reading the Book of Allah as it should be read, by way of a careful and thorough reading. Reading the Book of Allah as it should be read is only if it is a reading of absorption and comprehension, with a deep, enlightened mind, without taking a sentence or verse out of its complete context, or distorting words from their proper places, or deviating from His verses, or contradicting each other, while referring what is similar in it to what is clear. If we do some of that, especially with regards to the following verses, then a number of principles emerge. To begin:

وَأَذْكُرْ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أَنذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَخْفَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النُّدُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَمِينِهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ لَا تَعْنِدُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ عَظِيمٍ

*Mention [Hud] of the tribe of Ad: he warned his people among the sand dunes - other warners have come and gone both before and after him - 'Worship no one but Allah: I fear for you, that you will be punished on a terrible Day.'*¹

This is the infallible translation of the saying of the Prophet Hud, peace be upon him; and perhaps of the saying of the Messengers before him to the nation of 'Ad, and the Messengers to the nations neighboring them, which is set out in the next verse:

فَإِنْ أَغْرَضُوكُمْ فَقُلْ أَنْذِرْنِي مَثْلُ صَاعِقَةٍ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ، إِذْ جَاءُوكُمْ الرَّسُولُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ
لَا تَعْنِدُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ قَالُوا لَنُؤْشَأَنَا شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَا تَنْزَلْنَ مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا أُنْسِلْنَا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

*If they turn away, say, 'I have warned you about a blast like the one which struck Ad and Thamud: when their messengers came to them, from all angles, saying, 'Worship no one but Allah,' they said, 'If our Lord had wished, He would have sent down angels. We do not believe in the message with which you have been sent.'*²

¹ Qur'ān, 46: 21

² Qur'ān, 41: 13/14

These are for Hud and Shālih and perhaps for all the Messengers to 'Ad and Thamud before them, and perhaps for the Messengers to the nations neighbouring them. In the next verse we find recorded the following:

ما تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ إِلَّا بِمَا يَرَى اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَعْلَمُونَ

All those you worship instead of Him are mere names you and your forefathers have invented, names for which Allah has sent down no sanction. Authority belongs to Allah alone, and He orders you to worship none but Him: this is the true faith, though most people do not realise it.³

This is also the infallible translation of the saying of Yusuf, peace be upon him. Next, there is:

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدِينِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَنْلَفِعُ عِنْدَكُمُ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَّاهُمَا فَلَا تَنْهَى لَهُمَا أَفْيَ وَلَا تُنْهِرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully.⁴

The verse here is an address to the *Ummah* of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The address includes all of mankind and the *Jinn* until the Day of Judgement. From these noble verses, which are all Meccan, it must be affirmed that Hud and Shālih, and with them a group of Messengers from the ancestors of 'Ad and Thamud, and the nations neighbouring each of them; and likewise Yusuf and Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon them, have addressed their peoples, each in the language of his people, with a comprehensive address that cannot be translated into Arabic with complete, precise, and infallible accuracy except through this phrase – 'Worship no one but Allah.' With regards to any additional commands, prohibitions, laws, or etiquettes that are sometimes, though not always mentioned regarding some Messengers, they are necessarily part of what is encompassed by the

³ Qur'an, 12: 40

⁴ Qur'an, 17: 23

command to 'worship Allah,' they serve as explanatory details or as instances of specifying that overriding general principle.

In tandem with this, the Qur'an has expressed the same comprehensive address: 'Do not worship other than Allah' with a second expression, which is - 'Worship Allah: you have no god other than Him.' Verses such as these are Meccan in origin and include the following:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِي أَعْبُدُو اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ أَلَّهِ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ
We sent Noah to his people. He said, 'My people, worship Allah: you have no god other than Him. I fear for you the punishment of a fearsome Day!'⁵

Here, this is the precise and infallible translation of Noah's statement, peace be upon him, from the language of Noah's people into the eloquent Qur'anic Arabic; and the Translator is the One who has encompassed all things in knowledge. Next, is the verse referring to Hud, peace be upon him, translating his statement into the infallible text of the final revelation, which reads:

وَإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِي أَعْبُدُو اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ أَلَّهِ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَقَّهُونَ
To the people of Ad We sent their brother, Hud. He said, 'My people, Worship Allah: you have no god other than Him. Will you not take heed?'⁶

The next verse speaks of what Shālih peace be upon him said:

وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِي أَعْبُدُو اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ أَلَّهِ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ أَيْةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلُ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَإِذَا خَذَلُوكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ
To the people of Thamud We sent their brother, Salih. He said, 'My people, worship Allah: you have no god other than Him. A clear sign has come to you now from your Lord: this is Allah's she-camel a sign for you— so let her graze in God's land and do not harm her in any way, or you will be struck by a painful torment.'⁷

The next verse relates to Shu'ayb, his statement translated into the infallible text of the final revelation, which reads as follows:

⁵ Qur'an, 7: 59

⁶ Qur'an, 7: 65. A further verse is quoted from [11: 50] reiterating the central message.

⁷ Qur'an, 7: 73

وإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيْتٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكِبَرَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخُسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُنْهِسُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَغْدَ إِصْلَاحَهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

To the people of Midian We sent their brother, Shu'ayb. He said, 'My people, worship Allah: you have no god other than Him. A clear sign has come to you from your Lord. Give full measure and weight and do not undervalue people's goods; do not cause corruption in the land after it has been set in order: this is better for you, if you are believers.'⁸

A second verse is mentioned next, this time related to Șālih peace be upon him where he said:

وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرُكُمْ
فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ تَمَّ ثُوَبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنْ رَبِّيْ قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

To the Thamud, We sent their brother, Salih. He said, 'My people, worship Allah. You have no god other than Him. It was He who brought you into being from the earth and made you inhabit it, so ask forgiveness from Him, and turn back to Him: my Lord is near, and ready to answer.'⁹

There is also a second verse mentioning the same of Shu'ayb, peace be upon him:

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْفَصُوا الْمُكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي
أَرَأَكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ

And to Midian, We sent their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'My people, worship Allah. You have no god other than Him. Do not give short measure nor short weight. I see you are prospering, but I fear you will have torment on an overwhelming Day.'¹⁰

Following this, another verse follows relating to Noah, peace be upon him:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَا قَوْمَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَشْكُونَ

⁸ Qur'an, 7: 85

⁹ Qur'an, 11: 61

¹⁰ Qur'an, 11: 84

We sent Noah to his people. He said, 'My people, worship Allah - you have no god other than Him. Will you not heed Him?'¹¹

Next, this verse provides the wording from a Messenger to whom we have not been informed of his name, he says:

فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَشْكُونَ

And sent one of their own as a Messenger: 'Worship Allah, you have no god other than Him. Will you not heed Him?'¹²

The Qur'an expressed the same comprehensive address: 'Do not worship except Allah,' precisely, with a third expression, which is: 'That there is no god except Me, so worship Me,' with the most complete and perfect wording, as is evident from contemplating the two Meccan verses set out here:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونَ

We never sent any Messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so worship Me.'¹³

This is also certainly for all the Messengers, including Moses, peace be upon him, to whom it was specifically addressed:

إِنَّمَا أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me and keep up the prayer so that you remember Me.¹⁴

The fact that this formulation is the most complete and perfect is clearly evident from the fact that it is what Allah addressed Moses with when He called to him from the shore of the right valley in the blessed spot of the tree, so He made him know Himself, and by His name that He chose for Himself, and commanded him with the entirety of the matter. In tandem with this, the

¹¹ Qur'an, 23: 23

¹² Qur'an, 23: 32

¹³ Qur'an, 21: 25

¹⁴ Qur'an, 20: 14

Qur'ān expressed the same comprehensive address, precisely, with a fourth expression, which is:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَبَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ
الظُّنُولَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

We sent a Messenger to every community, saying, 'Worship Allah and shun false gods.' Among them were some Allah guided; misguidance took hold of others. So travel through the earth and see what was the fate of those who denied the truth.¹⁵

Once again, the Qur'ān expressed the same comprehensive address: 'Do not worship except Allah,' precisely, with a fifth expression, which is, to 'Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him,' as is evident from contemplating the next two verses, the first of which is Meccan, the latter from Medina:

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَبِالْأُولَىٰ دِينَ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَتَنَعَّمُ عِنْدَكُمُ الْكَبِيرُ أَهْدَهُمَا أَوْ كِلَّاهُمَا فَلَا تَنْقُلْ لَهُمَا أَفْتِ
وَلَا تُنْهِرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قُوْلًا كَرِيمًا

Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully.¹⁶

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا شُرْكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْأُولَىٰ دِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْجَارُ الْجُنُبُ وَالصَّاحِبُ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنُ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا

Worship Allah; join nothing with Him. Be good to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to neighbours near and far, to travellers in need, and to your slaves. God does not like arrogant, boastful people.¹⁷

Aḥādīth upon the topic

It is further reaffirmed by what the Seal of Prophethood, peace and blessings be upon him, stipulated to the Anṣār on the day of the Pledge of 'Aqaba: 'I

¹⁵ Qur'ān, 16: 36

¹⁶ Qur'ān, 17: 23

¹⁷ Qur'ān, 4: 36

*stipulate for my Lord, the Mighty and Sublime: that you worship Him and do not associate anything with Him; and for myself, that you protect me from what you protect yourselves, your children, and your women from.' Such has been cited in the corpus of *aḥādīth*, in a long comprehensive account set out in *Dalā'il al-Nubuwah*:*

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ بْنُ الْهَيْثَمَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَخْمَدَ بْنُ أَبِي الْعَوَامِ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ
بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ يَسَارٍ عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقِ السِّعِيْيَيِّ عَنْ الشَّعْبِيِّ وَعَنْ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ بْنِ عُمَرٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
بْنِ عُمَرٍ وَعَنْ عَقِيلِ بْنِ أَبِي طَلْبٍ وَعَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ابْنِ أَخِي الرُّهْبَرِيِّ عَنْ الرُّهْبَرِيِّ قَالَ
لَمَّا اشْتَدَّ الْمُشْرِكُونَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Muhammad ibn Ja'far ibn al-Haytham narrated to us he said Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abi al-Awwām narrated to us, my father narrated to me, Muhammad ibn Ibrāhim ibn Yassār narrated to us from Abu Ishāq al-Sabi'ee from al-Sha'bi and 'Abd al-Malik ibn Umayr from Abdullah ibn 'Amr from 'Uqayl ibn Abi Tālib; and from Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Akhi al-Zuhri from al-Zuhri, he said: When the *mushrikeen* intensified their hostility towards the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him.

He narrated the long and comprehensive account until he reached the discussion with the Anṣār in the presence of al-Abbās, and what the Anṣār said, which their speaker concluded by saying:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ خُذْ لِنَفْسِكَ مَا شِئْتَ وَاشْتَرِطْ لِرَبِّكَ مَا شِئْتَ! فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَشْتَرَطَ
لِرَبِّي عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ تَعْبُدُهُ وَلَا شُرْكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا؛ إِنَّ

(It was said) O Messenger of Allah! Take for yourself whatever you wish and set whatever conditions you wish on behalf of your Lord. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him said: '*I set the condition for my Lord, the Mighty and Sublime, that you worship Him and do not associate anything with Him*,' etc.¹⁸

¹⁸ Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahāni *Dalā'il al-Nubuwah* [Vol. 1, no. 221]

Another comprehensive account of this is to be found in *al-Sharī'ah* by al-Ajurri by way of a different channel of narration,¹⁹ but carrying this wording:

أَشْرَطْ لِرَبِّي عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ تَعْبُدُوهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا؛ وَلِنَفْسِي أَنْ تَمْنَعُونِي مِمَّا تَمْنَعُونَ مِنْهُ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنَسَاءَكُمْ

I stipulate on behalf of my Lord, the Mighty and Sublime, that you worship Him and do not associate anything with Him; and for myself, that you protect me as you would protect yourselves, your children, and your spouses.

By way of a third independent channel of narration, the following wording is also recorded again by Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahāni.

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عَمْرُو بْنِ خَالِدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي حَيْثَمَةَ عَنْ أَبِي الْأَسْنُودِ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الْزُّبِيرِ قَالَ لَمَّا حَضَرَ الْمُؤْسِمَ حَجَّ نَفَرَ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ مِنْ بَنِي مَالِكٍ بْنِ الْجَجَّارِ مِنْهُمْ مُعَاذُ بْنُ عَفْرَاءَ وَأَسْعَدُ بْنُ رَزَّارَةَ وَمِنْ بَنِي رُزَبِيٍّ رَافِعُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ وَدَكْوَانُ بْنُ عَبْدِ قَيْسٍ وَمِنْ بَنِي خَمْ بْنِ عَوْفٍ غَبَادَةُ بْنِ الصَّاتِمَةِ وَأَبُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ شَعْلَةَ وَمِنْ بَنِي عَبْدِ الْأَشْهَلِ أَبُو الْهَيْمَنِ بْنِ النَّيْهَانِ وَمِنْ بَنِي عَمْرُو بْنِ عَوْفٍ عُرْبِيُّ بْنِ سَاعِدَةَ فَأَتَاهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، ... إِلَخْ فَلَمَّا حَدَّثُهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، بِالْأَذْنِ حَصَّةُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِهِ مِنَ الْبُنُوَّةِ وَالْكَرَامَةِ وَدَعَاهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَإِلَى أَنْ يَنْبَغِيُّوهُ وَيَمْنَعُوهُ مِمَّا يَمْنَعُونَ مِنْهُ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَأَمْوَالُهُمْ أَجْلَبُوا وَصَدَّقُوا وَقَالُوا أَشْرَطْ لِرَبِّكَ وَلِنَفْسِكَ مَا شِئْتُ، قَالَ أَشْرَطْ لِرَبِّي أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَلَا تَعْبُدُوهُ؛ وَأَشْرَطْ لِنَفْسِي أَنْ تَمْنَعُونِي مِمَّا تَمْنَعُونَ مِنْهُ أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالُكُمْ

Sulaymān narrated to us from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Khālid, he said my father narrated to me he said Ibn Lahiya narrated to us from Abul'Aswad from 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr he said: When the season of *Hajj* arrived, a group from the Anṣār came to perform *Hajj*. They were from Banu Mālik ibn al-Najjār, including Mu'ādh ibn Afrā'

¹⁹ The *isnād* for this is: Abu Ḥafṣ Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn Bakkār al-Qāfiṭī narrated to he said said Abul' Aṣbagh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Kāmil al-Asādi he said my father narrated to me, he said 'Ulwān ibn Dāwud al-Bajili narrated to us from al-Laythī, namely Abul Muṣabbīh from Abu Zinād he said – When the *mushrikeen* intensified their persecution of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in Mecca, he said to his uncle al-Abbās: 'O uncle, go to 'Ukāz and show me the dwellings of the Arab tribes...' The Arabic edition mentions that the narrative continues to this point providing a long and comprehensive account until the narrator mentions reached the dialogue with the Anṣār in the presence of al-Abbās, followed by the Prophetic wording as quote in the body-text. See: al-Ajurri, *al-Sharī'ah* [Vol. 4, no. 1146 p. 60 (*Shamela* edition)].

and Asad ibn Zurārah; from Banu Zurayq, Rāfi' ibn Mālik and Dhakwān ibn 'Abd Qays; from Banu Ghanam ibn 'Awf, 'Ubāda ibn al-Šāmit and Abu 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Tha'labah; from Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal, Abu al-Haythām ibn al-Tihān; and from Banu 'Amr ibn 'Awf, 'Uwaym ibn Sā'idah. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, came to them etc.

When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, told them about the Prophethood and honour that Allah the Mighty and Sublime, had bestowed upon him, and invited them to Islam, asking them to pledge allegiance to him and to protect him as they would protect themselves and their wealth, they responded positively, believed in him, and they said: 'Set the conditions on behalf of your Lord and for yourself as you wish.' He said: '*I stipulate on behalf of my Lord that you do not associate anything with Him and that you worship Him; and I stipulate on behalf of myself that you protect me as you would protect your own selves and your wealth.*'²⁰

Here, I would point out that it seems one of the narrators summarised the account by only reporting the wording '*That you do not associate anything with Him*', bearing in mind that this would necessarily include the phrasing of '*That you worship Him*'. By and large it is a valid approach as will become readily evident shortly. Taken in the round, these are definitive proofs of the Qur'ān, bearing equivalence in meaning of the following Qur'ānic phrases which can be expressed equationally as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ} \\ = \\ \text{أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونَ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَبَيُوا الطَّاغُوتَ} \end{aligned}$$

²⁰ Abu Nu'aym al-Asbahāni *Dalā'il al-Nubuwah* [Vol. 1, no. 222]. The Arabic edition carries a further fourth channel of narration which essentially has the same reported Prophetic wording but via a much longer *isnād*. The contextual information is slightly different, noting that 'Seventy men from the Anṣār performed *Hajj*, including forty men from the elderly among them and thirty from their youth.' See: al-Bayhaqī *Dalā'il al-Nubuwah* [Vol. 2, pp. 53/54 (*Shamela* edition)].

=

عَبْدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا شُرُكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا

Do not worship except Allah

=

Worship Allah; you have no god other than Him

=

Indeed, there is no god except Me: so worship Me

=

Worship Allah and shun the *Tāghut*

=

Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him

Perhaps we should first hasten to point out that the first statement is purely an expressive conveyance devoid of additional content which is informative. Likewise, the fourth and fifth statements are expressive since each consists of two utterances, both of which are foundational. As for the second statement, it is composed of both foundational as well as informative elements, though as a whole, it remains purely expressive. Similar can be applied to the third statement. Therefore, if we wish to analyse its components or compositions within a formulated equation, we must convert the informative elements into an appropriate foundational form or composed structure.

Regarding the necessity of converting forms of a statement into forms of construction, or even vice versa, for any discourse intended to be studied and from which equations or equivalences are to be derived, it is because the unity of the kind for both sides of any equation or equivalence is a necessary condition for its validity, as even students at elementary school would know. Given this approach, putting forth an equation like this – ‘ten sheep = one camel,’ – carries no sense in it whatsoever. This is due to the nature of the difference in kind. Naturally this would differ from an equation expressed as such: ‘the price of ten-sheep in Riyals in the market of Tā’if today is equal to / = the price of one camel in Riyals in the same market.’ In principle, that equation contains a correct formulation, which could in principle be verified empirically. Therefore, the proposed equation or equivalence which Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz al ash-Shaykh mentioned, is utterly invalid. As previously outlined, he said:

This is the commandment of Allah the Sublime to all Messengers and all people, ‘Worship none but Allah’ is *equal to* ‘There is no god but Allah.’ Hence, by equivalence, *al-Ilāh* becomes the one who is worshipped, and *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood) is *al-‘Ibādah*.²¹

There are several distinct proofs which demonstrate why this formulation is invalid. Each are thus considered in turn below.

Proof 1

The beginning of the construction to the phrase ‘Worship none...’ elicits a clear prohibition directed at the addressee to refrain from undertaking a specific act or set of actions; hence constructive in formulation. Yet the beginning of the second phrase, ‘There is no god/deity...’ relates to *negating* the very notion of the existence of a being of a certain kind – a divine being. In that sense, it is declaratory. Any constructive discourse cannot be equivalent to any declarative discourse whatsoever, as they relate specifically to different kinds or types. It is impossible to derive any ‘correspondence’ from them at all, as Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz al ash-Shaykh tried to do.

The declaration, ‘There is no god but Allah...’ is a statement borne of certainty, eternally true, as it exists in the eternal divine knowledge – which is fully known to Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. Thus, it is not *identical* to Allah’s first command to the Messengers and to those to whom they were sent. Therefore, the commandment is certainly: ‘To bear witness / testify that there is no god but Allah,’ or ‘To declare – there is no god but Allah.’

Proof 2

Following this, the statement – ‘I testify that there is no god except Allah,’ is a declaration by the speaker which formally attests to acknowledging Allah’s exclusive divinity. It expresses the firm belief that there is only one true god/deity, who is named in Arabic as ‘Allah.’ Given this, the subject matter that the testimony sets out, is the declaration and belief which is purely informative, relating to Allah’s exclusive divinity. A matter which is true and certain for all eternity. The statement doesn’t mention ‘worshippers,’ or even

²¹ See chapter 7.

'worship' at all. Neither does it outline any of the inner or outer acts, except for the presence of the belief which the one who declares this holds. In other words, the speaker, gives testimony to its truthfulness and acknowledges it, and renders submission thereafter. Moreover, the testimony of 'I testify that there is no god except Allah,' is the first and fundamental pillar of Islam. It is the starting point, meaning that *al-Uluhiyyah*, divinity, is the primary concept that needs to be defined at the outset prior to anything else. Once this is established, *then* the following is derived, a) the definition of *al-'Ibādah*, if it is based or stems from the definition of *al-Uluhiyyah*, or b) how the matter of *al-'Ibādah* is treated, if that is completely independent from the definition of *al-Uluhiyyah*. Broadly this is the correct approach to take, not an inversion of it which presents matters the opposite way around.

Proof 3

Given that the statement '*Do not worship anyone except Allah*,' is a *nahy* (prohibition) and it is foundationally expressive, whereas '*There is no god except Allah*,' is *khabar* (informative), it is necessary to unify the category. By way of example, this could be done by conversion of the informative statement '*There is no god except Allah*,' into the form of '*Amr* (a command), '*Testify that there is no god but Allah*.' From this, the equation would therefore be expressed as:

لَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ = اشْهُدُوا أَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

'*Do not worship anyone except Allah*' = '*Testify that there is no god but Allah*'

Despite this, the formulation wouldn't necessarily be complete, carrying some inherent problems, therefore unreliable, given that it is not strictly speaking derived from a definitive, unequivocal text of the Qur'an. To contrast this point, the equation which is correct from the Qur'an is:

أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ = أَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا إِنَّمَا فَاعْبُدُونَ

'*That you worship none but Allah*' = '*Indeed, there is no god but Me, so worship Me*'

The matter will be elucidated upon in due course. Notwithstanding this, the approach which Şālih ibn 'Abd al-Aziz al ash-Shaykh attempted is unique. I am not of the view that he has been preceded in that by anyone. Naturally his intention was to strive in pursuit of something good, yet he was hamstrung, as many have been before and after him, by the plague-like virus of Wahhābism that befogged his mind. Rather than walk he was left crawling, nay stumbling, much like what happened to the esteemed scholar al-Mu'allimī.

Perhaps we should then return to the preserved phrasing derived from the text of the Qur'an that we mentioned earlier. If we transform the third sentence: '*Indeed, there is no god except Me, so worship Me*,' into the third-person pronoun form, it becomes: '*Indeed, there is no god except Allah, so worship Him*,' which is equivalent to '*Worship Allah because there is no god/deity except Allah*.' If we temporarily disregard the sequencing relationship expressed by the 'because' [لِمَّا], we discover that there is two-commands set out here, '*Worship Allah*,' plus '*Testifying that there is no god except Allah*.' Take note of the original wording as expressed, '*There is no god but Me, so worship Me*,' is foundational. Thus when we disregarded the sequencing relationship, we were compelled to transform the declarative statement '*Indeed, there is no god except Me*,' into an imperative form – '*Know, acknowledge, and submit that there is no god except Allah*;' or rendered more concisely as being – '*Testify that there is no god/deity except Allah*.' From this the structuring of the sentence would be a) '*Testify that there is no god except Allah*,' and b) based upon that, to '*Worship Allah*.' Here this seeks to ensure that each of the components are of the same nature, which allows for a coherent approach when deriving equations or equivalences. However, the sequencing or causal relationship expressed by the conjunction particle of *fā'* [فَإِنْ], or the word 'because' [لِمَّا], cannot be completely dismissed if we aim for a fully accurate and integrated understanding. What is required is awareness of this sequencing relationship, as if the statement is purporting to say: '*Know that (worshiping Allah) is necessarily dependent upon testifying to His Oneness*.' One could argue that it is highly likely that this understanding is quite innate to mankind, being an essential truth which is deeply implanted in human nature itself. The verses therefore would serve as a reminder of this reality. Taken altogether, the most accurate interpretation of the wording would be: '*Remember and acknowledge what is already firmly established in your *Fitra* (inherent natural*

disposition), as being knowledge to the level of certitude – that worshipping Allah is necessarily dependent upon the testimony (of His Oneness).’ This reminder is intended to clarify concepts, to guide rational thought, and firmly shut the door against doubts and misconceptions, particularly those which have been fostered by the sect of Wahhābism.

The third sentence: ‘Indeed, there is no god except Me, so worship Me,’ can be simplified into an equation and an additional reminder:

Equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{اَللّٰهُ لَا إِلٰهٌ اِلّٰ اَنَا فَاعْبُدُونَ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{اَشْهُدُوا اَنَّهٗ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ} \end{aligned}$$

‘Indeed, there is no god but Me, so worship Me,’

=

‘Worship Allah’ + ‘Testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah.’

The reminder being: ‘Remember and acknowledge what is already firmly established in your *Fitrah* as certain knowledge: that ‘worshiping Allah’ is necessarily dependent upon the testimony (of His Oneness).’ As for the second sentence: ‘Worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him,’ its interpretation is to worship Allah because there is no god/deity for you *other than* Allah. If we repeat the second sentence with what we did earlier with the third sentence, letter by letter, we arrive at the following simplified equation, namely:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{اَشْهُدُوا اَنَّهٗ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{اَشْهُدُوا اَنَّهٗ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ} \end{aligned}$$

Worship Allah; you have no god/deity other than Him

=

Worship Allah + Testify that there is no god/deity for you other than Allah.

The reminder would be – ‘Remember and affirm what has been established in your innate natural disposition as certain knowledge, that the worship of Allah

is necessarily tied to that testimonial (of His Oneness).’ From the congruence of the second and third statements, we necessarily deduce that:

$$\text{مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ} = \text{لَا إِلٰهٌ اِلّٰ اللّٰهُ}$$

You have no god/deity other than Allah = There is no god/deity except Allah

Or in other words, the term relating to ‘you’ plural in Arabic [كُمْ] does not alter the reality of *Ulūhiyyah* (divinity) in any way, because it is an intrinsic attribute of Allah. If it is established that a certain being is a god/deity for a people, then it is established that He is a god/deity by His intrinsic nature, and thus He is the deity of everything in existence. Conversely, the true God is the deity by His intrinsic nature for all peoples, indeed for all beings, and even regardless of the existence of anything else at all.

Essentially there is nothing new in this overall. Rather, it is a further confirmation of what has already been established, which is that the concept of *Ulūhiyyah* is an expression of the intrinsic attributes of that being called ‘God,’ regardless of the existence of other beings, their actions, and their relationship to the being in question, or their absence. Thus, its definition is specifically devoid of any explicit or implicit reference to the actions of created beings, whatever their designation, and even to the existence of those beings altogether. *Ulūhiyyah* encompasses intrinsic attributes and considerations of the being in question; if it is eternal, then it is ‘God’ in eternity, and it is ‘God’ as long as it exists. If it is generated or contingent, then it is ‘God’ from the moment of its generation or occurrence, and it is ‘God’ as long as it exists. The last four equations are:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{اَشْهُدُوا اَنَّهٗ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{اَشْهُدُوا اَنَّهٗ لَا إِلٰهٌ اِلّٰ اللّٰهُ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{اَجْتَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ} \\ = \\ \text{اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ} + \text{لَا شَرِكَوْا بِاللّٰهِ شَيْئاً} \end{aligned}$$

Worship Allah + Testify that there is no god/deity other than Allah

=

Worship Allah + Testify that there is no god/deity except Allah

Worship Allah + Shun the *Tāghut*
=

Worship Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah

From this, it necessarily and inevitably follows:

اَشْهُدُوا اِنَّهُ مَا مِنْ اِلَهٍ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ

=
اللَّهُ اِلَّا اِلَهٌ لَا اَشْهُدُوا اِنَّهُ

=
اجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

=
لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئاً

Testify that there is no other god/deity besides Allah

=

Testify that there is no god except Allah

=

Shun the *Tāghut*

=

Do not associate anything with Allah

But the sentence – ‘Testify that there is no god/deity except Allah, and ‘Testify that there is no deity *other* than Allah, are equivalent and are precisely the same. This bears the same equivalence to - ‘Do not set up another god/deity besides Allah,’ or ‘Do not ascribe any aspect of divinity to any other than Allah.’ These are entirely equal to the statement: ‘Shun the *Tāghut* = Do not associate anything with Allah.’

All of this necessarily requires the definitive conclusion that the matter of *Shirk bi'Allah* - associating partners with Allah, the *Shirk al-Kufr* – which is the major *Shirk* that is the nullifier of Islam, expels from the Islamic *Millah* anyone who had previously entered it, is exclusively therefore - to set up *another* god/deity alongside or besides Allah. This is supported and confirmed by the text of the Qur'ān, namely:

لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ اِلَهًا اَخْرَى فَنَقْعَدْ مَذْمُومًا مَذْهُولًا

Set up no other god beside Allah, or you will end up disgraced and forsaken.²²

It is further confirmed once again by way of:

ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ اِلَهًا اَخْرَى فَنَقْعَدْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَذْمُومًا مَذْهُولًا

[Prophet], this is some of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you: do not set up another god beside Allah, or you will be thrown into Hell, blamed and rejected.²³

There is also the exposition upon the terrifying consequences that doing this leads to – damnation, as expressed in other verses:

الْقَيْمَانَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ غَنِيمَ، مَنَّاعَ لَهُنْ مُّعَذِّبٌ مُّرَبِّبٌ؛ الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ اِلَهًا اَخْرَى فَلَاقَهُمَا فِي الْعَذَابِ
الشَّنَدِيدِ؛ قَالَ قَرِيْبُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا اطْغَيْتَهُ وَلَكِنَّ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

‘Hurl every obstinate disbeliever into Hell, everyone who hindered good, was aggressive, caused others to doubt, and set up other gods alongside Allah. Hurl him into severe punishment!’ and his [evil] companion will say, ‘Lord, I did not make him transgress; he had already gone far astray himself.’²⁴

Indeed this is also what the predecessors, the *Salaf* of this *Ummah* and the senior Companions had understood, as set out in al-Bukhāri's *Adab al-Mufrad*:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّاسُ النَّرْسِيُّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْبَصَرَةِ
قَالَ سَمِعْتُ مَعْلُوْبَ بْنَ يَسَارٍ يَقُولُهُ أَنْطَلَقَتْ مَعَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا بَكْرٍ! لِلشَّرِكِ فِيكُمْ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَبِيبِ النَّمَلِ. فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَهَلِ الشَّرِكُ
إِلَّا مَنْ جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ اِلَهًا اَخْرَى؟ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ،
لِلشَّرِكِ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَبِيبِ النَّمَلِ، أَلَا أَدْلِكَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا فَعَلْتَهُ ذَهَبَ قَلْبِهِ وَكَثِيرٌ؟ قَالَ قَلْ اللَّهُمَّ
إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَشْرِكَ بِكَ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ، وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمُ

‘Abbās al-Narrsi narrated to us he said ‘Abd al-Wāhid narrated to us he said Layth narrated to us he said a man from the people of Basra reported to me, he said I heard Ma'qil ibn Yassār saying that he came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, with Abu Bakr, may

²² Qur'ān, 17: 22

²³ Qur'ān, 17: 39

²⁴ Qur'ān, 50: 24/27

Allah be pleased with him. He said: ‘*O Abu Bakr, Shirk is more concealed among you than the movement of ants.*’ Thereafter Abu Bakr replied, ‘Is Shirk anything other than attributing another god besides Allah?’ The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him replied and said: ‘*By Him who has my soul in His hand, Shirk is more concealed than the movement of ants. Shall I not teach you something which if you say it, it will eliminate its minor or major forms?*’ Thereafter he said: ‘*Say - O Allah! I seek refuge in you lest I associate anything with you while I know it, and I seek your forgiveness for what I do not know.*’²⁵

The statement of Abu Bakr al-Ṣadeeq may Allah be pleased with him, an eloquent Arab from the Quraysh, nay, a man at the pinnacle of eloquence, in this tradition - ‘*Is Shirk anything other than attributing another god besides Allah,*’ is precisely our statement that we have previously elaborated. No other meaning of *Shirk* had formed in his mind *except taking* another god/deity alongside Allah, that is, attributing something of divinity to *other* than Allah. The remainder Prophetic reply regarding the hidden latency of *Shirk* is a new legal terminology brought by the final revelation. This wasn’t previously known to the Arabs up to that moment, nor known to Abu Bakr and the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Thus, he gave actions and intentions the name ‘*Shirk*,’ classified them as ‘*practical Shirk,*’ [شركاً عملياً] and deemed them sinful and forbidden, though not expelling one from the domain of Islam, even though they are not at the core or essence of the *Shirk* of disbelief, which contradicts the two testimonies of faith, in other words, completely contradicts and nullifies one’s Islam, expels one from the *Deen*, and condemns the individual, bar any repentance once the message has reached them, to an everlasting curse and damnation in the fire.

This matter of ‘*al-Shirk al-Khafi*,’ (the hidden *Shirk*), or *al-Shirk al-Amali* (practical *Shirk*) or even *al-Shirk al-Asghar* (minor *Shirk*) was newly established by the terminology of the Lawgiver and is not rooted in the original language. Hence, it does not form the core focus of the present chapter. We are only examining, and nothing more, the *original meaning* understood by the pure Arabs, both believers and disbelievers, at the time of revelation, when they spoke about gods/deities, worship, and sanctity before

²⁵ al-Bukhāri ‘*Adab al-Mufrad* [Vol. 1, no. 716]

the introduction of this new legal terminology. Moreover, this is also what the early generations of the *Ummah* understood, as evidenced by the testimony of Abdullah ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, when a man, apparently from the *Khawārij*, the extremist asked him a series of repeating questions upon what is *Shirk*. The tradition is to be found in the *Muṣṣanaf* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq:

عَنْ الرَّزَاقِ عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ سَلَيْمَانَ عَنْ بَيْزِيدِ الرَّشِيقِ قَالَ حَتَّىٰنَا أَبُو مُجْلِزٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ جَالِسًا عَنْ أَبْنِ عُمَرَ فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ رَجُلٌ، قَالَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ مَا الْإِشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ؟ قَالَ أَنْ تَجْعَلُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ، قَالَ أَيْضًا يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ مَا الْإِشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ؟ قَالَ أَنْ تَنْهَىٰ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا، قَالَ أَيْضًا يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ مَا الْإِشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ؟ قَالَ أَخْرَجَ عَلَيْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ مُسْلِمًا لَمَا أَخْرَجْتَ عَنِي، فَخَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ وَغَضِبَ أَبْنُ عُمَرَ عَنْهُ بَشِيدًا قَالَ كُنْتُ لَمَّا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ شَدَّةِ عَصَبِهِ لَاخْرُجُ، فَضَرَبَ بِيَدِي عَلَى رُكُنِي فَقَالَ أَرْجُو أَنْ لَا تَكُونَ مِنْهُمْ قَالَ كُلْتُ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنَ أَتَىَ الْمَدِينَةَ طَالِبًا حَاجَةً فَأَفْلَمَهُ بِهَا السَّبْعَةُ الْأَشْهُرُ وَالثَّمَانِيَّةُ الْأَشْهُرُ، كَيْفَ أَصْلَى؟ قَالَ صَلَّى رَكْعَيْنِ، رَكْعَيْنِ

(From) ‘Abd al-Razzāq from Ja’far ibn Sulaymān from Yazeed ibn Rishk he said Abu Mijlaz narrated to us he said: I was sitting with Ibn Umar, when a man entered upon us and he said: ‘O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān, what is associating partners with Allah?’ In reply, Ibn Umar said: ‘That you make another god alongside Allah.’ (The man) also asked: ‘O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān, what is associating partners with Allah?’ Ibn Umar replied, ‘That you take besides Allah rivals.’ (The man) asking again said: ‘O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān, what is associating partners with Allah?’ At this juncture Ibn Umar then said: ‘I urge you, if you are a Muslim, to leave me at once!’ The man then left, and Ibn Umar became extremely angry. Seeing his anger, I stood up to leave as well, but he struck my knee with his hand and said, ‘Sit down! I hope that you are not among them.’ I then said, ‘O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahmān - I had come to Medina seeking a need and to stay there for seven or eight months – (so) how should I pray?’ He replied, ‘Pray two *rak’ats*, two *rak’ats*.²⁶

As for the first statement – ‘That you worship none but Allah,’ it may seem problematic at first glance because at a cursory level, it only appears to be limited to a firm and absolute prohibition against worshipping anything other

²⁶ *Muṣṣanaf* ‘Abd al-Razzāq [Vol. 2, no. 4364]

than Allah, without any exception whatsoever. Thus, it might seem like a pure prohibition, containing no command at all, because the apparent meaning of this statement is: 'Do not worship anything at all, except Allah, absolutely; I neither forbid you from worshipping Him nor command you to do so.' However, what appears at first glance from the wording of the statement is illusory, because the addressees cannot possibly accept the address: 'Do not worship anything other than Allah, absolutely,' nor can they adhere to this prohibition entirely, unless, a) They have firstly acknowledged, submitted, and surrendered to Allah in terms of *Ilāhiyya* (godhood). That the One commanding is the true God, the existent Creator and He is Allah the Exalted. Following that, b) they have acknowledged, submitted, and surrendered to Him in terms of *al-Qadāsah* [القدسية] - Holiness, for He does not lie nor wrong, eternally and forever. Lastly, c) they have acknowledged, submitted, and surrendered to Him in terms of *al-Hākimiyah*, namely His sovereignty and prerogative of command; His absolute, supreme, and ultimate authority, that is, His inherent right to command and prohibit absolutely and unconditionally, except for what He has obligated or forbidden upon Himself or made conditioned therein.

The meaning of the sentence – 'That you worship none but Allah,' is in reality, an exhaustive elaboration – 'You must know by necessity of reason that Allah exists, that He is the true God, the Creator, the Doer of what He wills, and that He has the inherent right to command and prohibit, absolutely and unconditionally, except for what He has obligated upon Himself or conditioned therein. This is because He is the true God. Thus, acknowledging this and submitting to Him is inherently good and obligatory by reason. He has eternally forbidden falsehood upon Himself. Therefore, firm belief and absolute certainty in the truth of His Message is obligatory by reason. He has sent me to you to remind you of what is rationally obligatory and to convey to you that He has mandated and obligated this upon you by divine law, meaning He demands from you, your acknowledgment, submission, and surrender to all of this, such that whoever does so, deserves praise and reward from Allah, and whoever does not, deserves blame and punishment from Him. He forbids you from worshipping anything other than Allah, absolutely and unconditionally.'

Once this is established and clarified without doubt in the mind, it becomes permissible for us to return to summarising this lengthy discourse.

Thus, the correct interpretation of His statement to not worship except Allah, is to - acknowledge, submit, and surrender to Allah in His sovereignty, and not worship anything other than Allah, absolutely.

In actuality, the statement as it pertains to acknowledging, submitting and surrendering to Allah, is merely another formulation of the statement/command which is: '*Obey Allah*,' [أطِيعُوا اللَّهَ], a formulation readily seen in countless verses of the Qur'ān. Although it comes in the form of a command, it is not a literal command in that sense. Otherwise someone might say – 'How do I know that obeying Allah is obligatory? Is it by a prior command from Him?' This would require another prior command from Him, and so on *ad infinitum*, which is impossible. In reality, this wording contains two pieces of information, as though He, the Glorified and Exalted said, firstly: You know by necessity of reason that obeying Me, absolutely and unconditionally, is rationally obligatory and inherently good, as befits rational beings, and here I remind you of that. Secondly, I inform you in addition to that, I demand that obedience from you, and I will hold you accountable for it, and there will be a) reward for obedience in the form of absolute happiness, eternal bliss, and everlasting pleasures, which every rational being seeks. This is in essence, a 'promise' that will undoubtedly be fulfilled, for Allah has obligated Himself to carry it out, and it is not permissible for Allah to break it. Or b), punishment for disobedience, from which there is no escape or deliverance, in an eternal fire and perpetual misery, from which every rational being should strive to escape from.

We therefore arrive, just as was the case with the second and third addresses, at the following equation, with an appropriate prior reminder being necessary for the address, so there is no need to explicitly state it:

Equation

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ} \\
 & = \\
 & \text{أَقْرُوا وَسَلَّمُوا لِلَّهِ بِالْحَكْمَيْةِ + لَا تَعْبُدُوا شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ مُطْلَقًا} \\
 & = \\
 & \text{'That you worship none but Allah'} \\
 & = \\
 & \text{Acknowledge, submit, and surrender to Allah in His *Hākimiyah* + Do not} \\
 & \text{worship anything other than Allah, absolutely}
 \end{aligned}$$

Or by way of alternate wording, it could be expressed as ‘*That you worship none but Allah*’ = Obey Allah + Don’t worship anything other than Allah, absolutely. The reminder would be – ‘Remember and acknowledge what is firmly established by way of your natural innate disposition, which is to testify to the *Hākimiyah* of Allah, or the obligation to obey Allah.’

Perhaps we may now return to completing the fundamental premise underpinning the truth as it relates to *Shirk*, by contemplating upon the wisdom expressed in the following verses as they relate to ‘the wise man.’ *Luqmān*. That is set out in the text where He the Exalted says:

وَلَقَدْ أَتَيْنَا لِقَمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرْ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَنِّيْ حَمِيدٌ، وَإِذْ قَالَ لِقَمَانَ لَاتِّيْهِ وَهُوَ يَبْعَثُهُ يَا بَنِي لَا تَشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ، أَنَ الشَّرُكُ أَظْلَمُ عَظِيمٌ، وَوَصَّيْنَا إِلَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمَّةٌ وَهُنَّ عَلَىٰ وَهُنِّ وَفَصَالَةٌ فِي عَمَّنِيْنَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدِيْكَ إِلَيْهِ الْمُصَبِّرُ، وَإِنْ جَاهَدُوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَشْرُكُ بِيْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُنْهِمُهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الْتَّنِيَا مَعْرُوفاً وَاتَّبِعُ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنْابَ إِلَيْهِ مُّمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجُعُهُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ، يَا بَنِي إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مُنْقَلَّ حَمَدَةٌ مِّنْ حَرْذَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَحْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَطْيَفُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ، يَا بَنِي أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهِ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكُ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأَمْرِ، وَلَا تُصْبِرْ حَدَّكَ لِلْنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْنَشْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَلِّ فُحْرِ، وَاقْصِدْ فِي مُشْبِكٍ وَاقْعُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ أَصْوَاتُ الْحَمِيرِ

We endowed Luqman with wisdom: ‘Be thankful to Allah: whoever gives thanks benefits his own soul, and as for those who are thankless - Allah is self-sufficient, worthy of all praise.’ Luqman counselled his son, ‘My son, do not attribute any partners to Allah: attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong.’ We have commanded people to be good to their parents: their mothers carried them, with strain upon strain, and it takes two years to wean them. Give thanks to Me and to your parents - all will return to Me. If they strive to make you associate with Me any- thing about which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them. Yet keep their company in this life according to what is right, and follow the path of those who turn to Me. You will all return to Me in the end, and I will tell you everything that you have done.

[And Luqman continued], ‘My son, if even the weight of a mustard seed were hidden in a rock or anywhere in the heavens or earth, Allah would bring it [to light], for He is all subtle and all aware. Keep up the prayer, my son; command what is right; forbid what is wrong; bear anything that happens to you steadfastly: these are things to be aspired to. Do not turn your nose up at people, nor walk about the place arrogantly, for Allah does not love arrogant or

*boastful people. Go at a moderate pace and lower your voice, for the ugliest of all voices is the braying of asses.’*²⁷

These verses may be one of the sources of the first phrase, ‘to worship none but Allah,’ as stated where He the Exalted said:

لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا أَخْرَ فَتَقْعُدْ مَدْمُومًا مَذْهُولًا، وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدِيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

*Set up no other god beside Allah, or you will end up disgraced and forsaken. Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents.*²⁸

Thereafter, He the Almighty enumerated many rulings and the enjoining of good morals, until He said, with repetition and emphasis:

ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أُوْحَى إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا أَخْرَ فَتَلْقَى فِي جَهَنَّمَ مُذْهُورًا

*This is some of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you: do not set up another god beside Allah, or you will be thrown into Hell, blamed and rejected.*²⁹

Despite some differences in etiquette and details, we cannot help but conclude that the statement of the wise man: ‘do not attribute any partners to Allah,’ is in essence, equivalent to Allah’s command – ‘Worship none but Allah.’ That is, we have arrived at the equation:

لَا تَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

=

لَا تَشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ

Worship none but Allah

=

Do not associate partners with Allah

The aforementioned equation gains further strength and clarity by noting that the wording of the verse from *Surah al-Isrā* as previously quoted: ‘*Set up no other god beside Allah, or you will end up disgraced and forsaken.*’ As noted

²⁷ Qur’ān, 31: 12/19

²⁸ Qur’ān, 17: 22/23

²⁹ Ibid. [v39]

earlier, *Shirk* is the matter of setting up another god with/alongside/beside Allah. Then, He reaffirmed the same overall meaning, but in different words, by saying ‘Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him.’ The conclusion to the matter is then set out in the wording as already quoted from *Surah al-Isrā’* [v39] – ‘do not set up another god beside Allah.’ Now at this juncture, in the same manner and by repeating the same discussion we conducted earlier when examining the comprehensive address of ‘That you worship none but Allah,’ the validation of the following equation can be presented:

$$\text{لَا شُرِكَ بِاللَّهِ} = \text{أَقْرَأْ وَسْلَمَ وَاسْتَسْلَمَ اللَّهُ بِالْحَاكِمِيَّةِ} + \text{لَا شُرِكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا عَلَى الْإِطْلَاقِ}$$

Do not attribute partners to Allah = Acknowledge, submit, and surrender to the *Hākimiyyah* of Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah whatsoever

Or expressed as being:

$$\text{لَا شُرِكَ بِاللَّهِ} = \text{أَطِعِ اللَّهَ} + \text{لَا شُرِكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا عَلَى الْإِطْلَاقِ$$

Do not attribute partners to Allah = Obey Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah whatsoever

But also:

$$\text{لَا تَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ} = \text{أَقْرَأْ وَسْلَمَ وَاسْتَسْلَمَ اللَّهُ بِالْحَاكِمِيَّةِ} + \text{لَا تَعْبُدُ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ مُطْلَقًا} = \text{لَا شُرِكَ بِاللَّهِ} = \text{أَشْهَدُوا}$$

Worship none but Allah = Acknowledge, submit, and surrender to the *Hākimiyyah* of Allah + Do not worship anything other than Allah, absolutely = Testify to the *Hākimiyyah* of Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah whatsoever.

Thus, the following equation is undoubtedly true:

$$\text{لَا تَعْبُدُ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ مُطْلَقًا} = \text{لَا شُرِكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا عَلَى الْإِطْلَاقِ}$$

Do not worship anything other than Allah, absolutely = Do not associate anything with Allah whatsoever

And it necessarily follows that:

$$\text{الشُّرُكَ بِاللَّهِ} = \text{عِبَادَةُ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ} = \text{أَنْ تَجْعَلُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ} = \text{نَسْبَةُ شَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْأَلْوَهِيَّةِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ}$$

Associating partners with Allah = Worshipping other than Allah = To make another god alongside Allah = Attributing any aspect of divinity to other than Allah

Here, the aforementioned equation can also be expressed as follows:

$$\text{عِبَادَةُ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ} = \text{نَسْبَةُ شَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْأَلْوَهِيَّةِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ} = \text{أَنْ تَجْعَلُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ} = \text{الشُّرُكَ بِاللَّهِ}$$

Worshipping other than Allah = Attributing any aspect of divinity to other than Allah = To make another god alongside Allah = *Shirk* with Allah

The validity of these equations will be confirmed repeatedly through independent proofs, some of which will be highlighted during the study of Ibrāhīm peace be upon him and his people, which is in Part VII of this present volume. Returning once again to the second discourse that we set out upon: ‘Worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him.’ To further clarify its meaning, and we have found that it entails:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ} \\ = \\ \text{أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ} + \text{أَشْهَدُوا أَنَّهُ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ} \\ = \\ \text{أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ} + \text{أَشْهَدُوا إِنَّهُ مَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ} \\ = \\ \text{اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ لَا أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ} + \text{أَشْهَدُوا إِنَّهُ} \\ = \\ \text{أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ} + \text{أَجْتَبَوْا الطَّاغُوتَ} \\ = \\ \text{أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ} + \text{لَا شُرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا} \end{aligned}$$

Worship Allah; you have no god other than Him

=
Worship Allah + Testify that you have no other god except Him

Worship Allah + Testify that there is no deity other than Allah

=

Worship Allah + Disavow the *Tāghut*

=

Worship Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah

Or, more specifically:

اعبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ

=

اعبُدُوا اللَّهَ + لَا شُرْكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا

Worship Allah; you have no god other than Him

=

Worship Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah

The first discourse had produced:

اللَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ

=

أَقْرَوْا وَسَلَمُوا وَاسْتَسْلَمُوا اللَّهُ بِالْحَكْمِيَّةِ + لَا تَعْبُدُوا شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ مُطْلَقًا

That you worship none but Allah

=

Acknowledge, submit, and surrender to the *Hākimiyah* of Allah + Do not worship anything other than Allah absolutely

Alternately, this could be:

اللَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ

=

أطِيعُوا اللَّهَ + لَا تَعْبُدُوا شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ مُطْلَقًا

That you worship none but Allah

=

Obey Allah + Do not worship anything other than Allah absolutely

But we had established the equation similarly, and here is one of its forms:

لَا تَعْبُدُ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ اللَّهِ مُطْلَقًا = لَا شُرْكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا عَلَى الْإِطْلَاقِ

Do not worship anything other than Allah absolutely

=

Do not associate anything with Allah at all

Therefore, the first discourse can have its result rephrased as follows:

اللَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ

=

أَقْرَوْا وَسَلَمُوا وَاسْتَسْلَمُوا اللَّهُ بِالْحَكْمِيَّةِ + لَا شُرْكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا عَلَى الْإِطْلَاقِ

That you worship none but Allah

=

Acknowledge, submit, and surrender to the *Hākimiyah* of Allah + Do not associate anything other than Allah absolutely

Or:

اللَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ

=

أطِيعُوا اللَّهَ + لَا شُرْكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا عَلَى الْإِطْلَاقِ

That you worship none but Allah

=

Obey Allah + Do not associate anything with Allah at all, absolutely

From the alignment of the first and second addresses, we arrive at the following equation:

اعبُدُوا اللَّهَ = أَقْرَوْا وَسَلَمُوا وَاسْتَسْلَمُوا اللَّهُ بِالْحَكْمِيَّةِ = أطِيعُوا اللَّهَ

Worship Allah = Acknowledge, submit, and surrender to Allah in His *Hākimiyah*
Hākimiyah = Obey Allah

Alternatively, this can also be expressed as follows:

عَبَادَةُ اللَّهِ = الشَّهَادَةُ بِالْحَكْمِيَّةِ لِلَّهِ = طَاعَةُ اللَّهِ

Worship Allah = Testifying to the *Hākimiyah* of Allah = Obey Allah

But, testifying to the *Hākimiyah* of Allah is precisely acknowledging and submitting that Allah is the Lord, meaning He is the Supreme Master, possessing the ultimate and highest authority to command and prohibit, and surrendering to Him without any condition or restriction. This is entirely consistent with the original covenant that was made, which is innate to mankind:

وَإِذْ أَخْذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّنِي بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ and they replied, ‘Yes, we bear witness.’ So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘We were not aware of this.’³⁰

Similarly it further aligns to the first and most important question in the grave after death – ‘Who is your Lord?’ We cannot speak of ‘worshipping Allah,’ unless we testify to Allah’s *Hākimiyah*, which is the pinnacle of Lordship, and Lordship is the backbone of Divinity. That is, unless we acknowledge Allah with all of divinity. Conversely, associating partners with Allah, which is worshipping other than Allah, occurs by attributing even the slightest aspect of divinity, meaning ‘some aspect of divinity,’ to *other* than Allah, even if only in one consideration.

12. Clarifying the precise meaning of the word ‘worship’

It is now time to clarify the meaning of *al-‘Ibādah* (worship). Worship of a being, in its true sense, is exclusively the attribution of some aspect of *Ulūhiyyah* (divinity) to that being. This is an indisputable certainty, established by the formulas previously presented and demonstrated, one of which is:

عبدة غير الله = نسبة شيء من الألوهية لغير الله

Worship of other than Allah = Attributing some aspect of divinity to other than Allah

This is also what the early generations, *al-Salaf*, intuitively understood with their *fitrah* (pure disposition) without needing detailed proof, as previously explained. They held the equivalence or equation which we have already stated:

عبدة الله = توحيد الله = شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله

Worship of Allah = *Tawheed* (Oneness) of Allah = Testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Therefore, attributing any aspect of divinity to any being is necessarily *al-‘Ibādah* (worship) of that being, even if no other action is directed towards it. This is what some Wahhābi’s refer to as ‘*Ibādah ‘Itiqādiyyah* (conceptual worship), a term that is imprecise and should be discarded because it implies that certain actions could be considered worship even though they have no

³⁰ *Qur’ān*, 7: 172

relation to belief. In truth, no action directed towards a being, or connected to a being, can be considered ‘*Ibādah* unless it is preceded by the attribution of some aspect of divinity to that being and built upon that belief. Any act of worship must be based on this prior attribution, as a necessary condition. In fact, we may go even further to state that labeling any condition of the heart, such as *uns* (intimacy), or any emotional response of the soul, such as *rahbah* (awe), or any physical reaction, such as *iqsh’arrār al-julūd* (the shuddering of the skin), or any specific voluntary human act, such as prostration, or any utterance, such as *madh* (praise) or *thanā’* (glorification) as ‘*Ibādah* of a being is merely figurative and a shorthand for saying that these acts are based on or arise from the true ‘*Ibādah*, which is the attribution of some aspect of divinity to that particular being.

It follows that *Uluhiyyah* must precede *al-‘Ibādah* in the order of existence, necessarily and without exception, if there is any deity at all. This deity must necessarily be Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. As for those who deny the existence of Allah, claiming that the universe is eternal and that *tabī’ah* (nature) - which they describe as eternal, lifeless, blind, deaf, and mute - acts as a creative force out of necessity, such a nature, even if they claim it to be necessarily existent and eternal, cannot be described as possessing *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and does not deserve to be called a deity. Therefore, they are bound to assert that worship, i.e., the beliefs and actions of worshippers, which indeed exist, *precedes* the existence of the *Ilāh* (god), which in their view is nothing but a mental construct created by those beliefs and actions. This view is strikingly similar to that of the Wahhābi sect, whose erroneous views we have previously refuted and dismantled. Their core belief is that through human acts of worship directed towards a certain entity, that entity becomes a deity. Congratulations, then, to both groups!

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلِيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَذَّا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوَحَّدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابُ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةُ
فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا، وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدُوا هُدًىٰ وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ
رَبِّكُمْ تُوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَرْدًا

Say [Prophet], ‘The Lord of Mercy lengthens [the lives] of the misguided, until, when they are confronted with what they have been warned about— either the punishment [in this life] or the Hour [of Judgement]— they realise who is worse situated and who has the weakest forces.’ But Allah gives more guidance to

those who are guided, and good deeds of lasting merit are best and most rewarding in your Lord’s sight.¹

Thus, ‘*Ibādāt* - acts of worship, are those verbal expressions and actions that are either related to, directed towards, or devoted to a being that is believed to possess some aspect of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity). Specifically, they include words and actions that manifest or express submission, humility, obedience, reverence, respect, trust, reliance, fear, awe, love, intimacy, closeness, need, and dependence, or those that seek to attract benefit or repel harm from a divine being. Therefore, what people commonly refer to as ‘*Ibādāt* (acts of worship), *sha’ā’ir* (rituals), or *manāsik* (rites) are not, in themselves, the essence of ‘*Ibādah*; rather, they are expressions, manifestations, or applications of it.

It follows, necessarily, that anyone who directs any of these acts of ‘*Ibādāt* - provided they are correctly defined, towards someone *other than* Allah is a *mushrik* and a *kāfir*. This is because such an action must necessarily be preceded by a belief in *Shirk* and *Kufr*. The acts performed by the *mushrik*, or the words they utter, are merely expressions, manifestations, and applications of that *Shirk* and *kufr*, but they are not the *essence* of *Shirk* or *kufr* in themselves. These acts merely constitute an *increase in disbelief*, similar to the practice of *al-nasī’* (deferring sacred months).

Thus, the question frequently asked by the followers of the Wahhābi sect – ‘What is the ruling on directing an act of worship to someone other than Allah?’ is a question that could only arise from those who mistakenly believe in a definitive list of isolated actions that are *inherently* deserving of being called ‘*Ibādah*. They assume that acts of worship can be defined independently of the concept of *Uluhiyyah*. In other words, the Wahhābi definition is as follows:

التعريف الوهابي: العبادة = مجموعة من العبادات = قائمة حصرية من العبادات

‘*Ibādah* = A set of ‘*Ibādāt* = A specific, exclusive list of acts of worship.

This understanding is entirely false, as we have previously explained, and we will provide further elaboration here, as well as in the chapter specifically

¹ *Qur’ān*, 19: 75: 76

dedicated to the nature of sanctification and ritual acts of worship. Despite the clarity and certainty of the aforementioned proofs that demonstrate the falsehood of the Wahhābi understanding of '*Ibādah*', we will continue to refute their derivative propositions, one by one, in the aforementioned chapter. Thus, it is essential, without exception, that the inner states of the heart, the emotional and psychological responses, and the voluntary words and actions encompassed by the term '*Ibādah*' are only those that are directed towards, or related to, a being in whom some aspect of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) is believed. We can elaborate on this further by examining a range of actions that humans commonly refer to as '*Ibādah*', along with the typical intentions and purposes that accompany these actions. The correct definition of '*Ibādāt*' - acts of worship, is necessarily as follows:

'*Ibādāt*' are: inner states of the heart, emotional and psychological reactions, visible and hidden verbal expressions and actions, and *sha'a'ir* - specific rituals, with the latter being a structured combination of specific actions and words. These are either related to, directed towards, or devoted to a being in whom some aspect of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) is believed. They are meant to express veneration, reverence, and sanctification for that being; to convey submission, humility, and subjugation; to seek closeness, intimacy, and the pleasure of that being; or to request its favor, kindness, and generosity. They may also involve seeking assistance in repelling harm or attracting benefit, or to avoid its wrath, punishment, or harm, and perhaps even to avert its malevolence or danger.²

This definition of the concept of '*Ibādah*' in its specific technical sense used by people when discussing religion, religiosity, deities, and sanctification, is thus, undoubtedly and certainly, the only correct understanding that aligns with reality and is necessitated by the corroborating texts of the Qur'ān. Whenever we find in the Qur'ān accounts of the Prophets, such as:

أَلَا تَعْبُدُ أَلَا اللَّهُ

² Here one can review and see that definition is structured, encapsulating the concept of '*Ibādāt*' in a precise and comprehensive manner. This clarifies that such acts are always connected to the belief in the divinity of the entity they are directed towards.

'Worship no one but Allah.'³

اعبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ

Worship Allah. You have no god other than Him.⁴

From the above, we know with absolute certainty that these verses necessarily imply the following, foremost to acknowledge, submit, and surrender to Allah's *Hākimiyah*, which means His inherent right to command and forbid; an absolute right without restriction, except for what He has obligated or prohibited upon Himself. When you acknowledge and submit to Allah's *Hākimiyah*, which is the pinnacle of *al-Rububiyyah*, you are simultaneously acknowledging and submitting to all of Allah's *Uluhiyyah* (divinity), since *al-Rububiyyah* is the backbone of *Uluhiyyah*. Secondly, do not believe in the divinity of anyone *other than* Allah, nor attribute any aspect of *Uluhiyyah* to anyone *other than* Allah. *Shirk* with Allah, which is the worship of other than Allah, is realised through the attribution of even the smallest degree of *Uluhiyyah* to another being. This means attributing *any portion* of *Uluhiyyah* to anyone other than Allah, even if it pertains to a single aspect. Any being to whom divinity is attributed either has no existence outside the imagination of misguided *mushrikeen*, or it exists outside the mind, but the attribution of divinity to it is falsehood, slander, and fabrication.

Thus, '*Ibādah*' of Allah has no meaning unless it involves the attribution of *all* divinity to Him, Exalted and Majestic. It is sufficient to focus on His *Hākimiyah* alone, for this is the pinnacle of *al-Rububiyyah*, and *al-Rububiyyah* is the backbone of *Uluhiyyah*. This necessarily leads to *Tawheed* and the rejection of *Shirk*. It is utterly impossible for a *mushrik* to be a worshipper of Allah or a monotheist. However, it is possible for someone to believe in the existence of Allah, or in some aspects of what is due to Allah. As for beings other than Allah, the attribution of even a portion of *Uluhiyyah* is sufficient for us to speak of the '*Ibādah*' of that other being, which is possible alongside *Shirk*. Praise be to Allah, who revealed the Book:

تَبَّاعَنَا إِنَّكُلْ شَيْءٍ وَهُدُىٰ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ

³ Qur'ān, 11: 2

⁴ Qur'ān, 11: 84

For We have sent the Scripture down to you explaining everything, and as guidance and mercy and good news to those who devote themselves to Allah.⁵

Taken as 'lords' besides Allah

What has been established upon the authority of 'Adi ibn Ḥātim, is the Prophetic wording which should suffice:

أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى الَّهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَفِي عَنْقِي صَلِيبًا مِنْ ذَهَبٍ، قَالَ يَا عَدِيَ، اطْرُحْ هَذَا الْوَثْنَ مِنْ عَنْقِكَ! قَالَ فَطَرَحَتْهُ، وَأَنْتَبَثَ إِلَيْهِ وَهُوَ يَقْرَأُ فِي سُورَةِ بِرَاءَةٍ فَقَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ أَتَخُذُوا أَخْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ ذُنُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَلَتْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّا لَسْنَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ! قَالَ أَلَيْسُ يَحْرَمُونَ مَا أَحْلَ اللَّهُ فَتَحَرَّمُونَهُ؟ وَيَحْلُونَ مَا حَرَمَ اللَّهُ فَتَحَلُّونَهُ؟ قَالَ قَلَتْ بَلِي، قَالَ فَنَّاكَ عَبَادَتُهُمْ

I came upon the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sporting a gold cross around my neck. So he (the Prophet) said: *O 'Adi, remove this wathn from your neck.* I removed it, then I approached him while he was reciting from *Surah al-Barā'ah*, the verse: '*They take their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah.*' In reply I said – O Messenger of Allah, we don't worship them! He replied, *Do they not forbid what Allah has made lawful, and you then forbid it? Do they not permit what Allah has forbidden, and you then permit it?* Yes I replied. He said: *That is the worship of them.*

Specifically the narration has been reported in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabārī.⁶ In terms of its wording, the *hadīth* is based upon that of Imām Abu Ḛārīb Muḥammad ibn al-Ālā' al-Hamdānī, and it has other pathways of reporting as per Imām al-Ṭabārī, whether extended or abbreviated. Al-Bukhārī has mention of this too in *al-Tarīkh al-Kabīr*, as well as al-Bayhaqī in his collection of *Sunan*.⁷ For al-Tirmidhī, who also has mention of this in his

⁵ *Qur'ān*, 16: 89

⁶ *Tafsir al-Ṭabārī* [Vol. 6, p. 354 (print edition)]. The *isnād* is Abu Ḛārīb and Ibn Wākī narrated to us they said Mālik ibn Ismā'īl narrated to us (*hawala*) and Ahmad ibn Ishāq narrated to us he said Abu Aḥmad narrated to us, all of them (narrating) from 'Abd al-Sallām ibn Ḥarb; he said Ghutayf ibn Ayan narrated to us from Mus'ab ibn Sa'd from 'Adi ibn Ḥātim. The verse quoted is from 9: 31, in full it reads: '*They take their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah, as well as Christ, the son of Mary. But they were commanded to serve only one God: there is no god but Him; He is far above whatever they set up as His partners.*'

⁷ al-Bukhārī *al-Tarīkh al-Kabīr* [Vol. 9, p. 408]; al-Bayhaqī *Sunan al-Kubrā* [Vol. 8, no. 15617].

Sunan, he said 'This is a *ḥasan ghareeb hadīth*.' Despite that, the truth is that it is resolutely *Ṣaḥīḥ*; Ibn Ḥazm too narrates it judging it *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and he is well known for his strictness and exactitude.

Reflect upon the reported Prophetic wording here – '*Do they not forbid what Allah has made lawful, and you then forbid it? Do they not permit what Allah has forbidden, and you then permit it?*' The phrase "*and you then forbid it*" can only by necessity mean in this context – you believe it to be prohibited (or forbidden). Likewise, '*and you then permit it*,' meaning that you believe it to be permissible and lawful. This belief cannot exist among these people *except* due to their conviction that the rabbis and monks possess the right to forbid and permit, that is, the right to legislate. They hold that they have prerogative of command. Or, in other words, they attribute *Hākimiyah* (or *al-Rububiyah* or ultimate authority, or call it whatever you wish) to the rabbis and monks. Then, reflect on his statement: '*That is their worship of them.*' Thus, attributing *Hākimiyah* to the rabbis and monks *is* the very essence of '*Ibādah*' directed towards them.

Viewed from another perspective, it is clear that people's stances regarding the relationship between actions they call '*Ibādāt*' (acts of worship) in this specific sense when speaking about deities, religion, religiosity, and sanctification - and the concept of *Ilāh* (deity) can be classified logically and strictly into one of the following positions which will be set out. Firstly, divinity – *al-Uluhiyyah*, has a definition that is entirely independent of the actions and attitudes of other beings. Whoever possesses any attribute of divinity is correctly termed *Ilāh* (god). Meanwhile, '*Ibādāt*' are merely a classification used by people to denote any act - whether internal or external, or any statement - whether from the heart or the tongue, that is directed towards or related to a being believed to be an *Ilāh*. These acts serve to express submission, humility, obedience, reverence, or fear and awe; or to convey poverty, need, and the request for bringing about benefit or repelling harm; or to express affection, love, intimacy, and seeking proximity, and so on. If this is true - and it is, as evidenced by the definitive proofs we have presented, with more to come, by the will of Allah, it follows necessarily that no internal or external statement or action - whether prostration, bowing, standing, bending, sitting, walking, or running; whether sacrificing, offering gifts, lighting candles, or burning incense; whether love, hatred, reverence, intention, desire, fear, hope, supplication, or seeking refuge; or any composite

ritual consisting of some of these—can be considered or termed as '*Ibādah* unless it is directed towards or related to an *ilah*. However, if the same action is directed towards or related to something else in which no divinity is believed, then it cannot be considered '*Ibādah* at all, and it is impermissible to call it such. Whoever does this has denied the Qur'ān, lied against Allah, and committed the gravest of slanders.

The second position - certain actions, by their very nature, are classified as acts of '*Ibādah* in and of themselves, regardless of the belief or perception of the one performing them concerning the being to whom they are directed or related. This is, in fact, the position of the Wahhābī sect when their statements are thoroughly analysed, as these statements are typically characterised by superficiality, ambiguity, inaccuracy, confusion, and contradiction, sometimes involving implicit or even explicit circular reasoning. On this basis, some claim, for example (but not limited to the following) that military salutes and 'saluting the flag' constitute *kufr* (disbelief) that expels one from Islam because they involve standing motionless, with complete humility, in a specific posture. This ruling applies even if the person firmly believes and is absolutely certain that the military officers or the flag are created beings, entirely subjugated and powerless, who can neither act nor decide except by Allah's permission and decree, and even if they believe that the flag is merely a piece of cloth tied to a pole, possessing no life, hearing, or sight, and no power to bring benefit or harm.

Similarly, some claim that seeking help from the Prophet peace be upon him and his family constitutes *Shirk Akbar* (major polytheism) merely by uttering it, regardless of the belief of the one seeking help from the Prophet peace be upon him and his family, even if they firmly believe and are absolutely certain that he is a created being, entirely subjugated and powerless, who possesses neither harm nor benefit for himself, nor does he control '*death, life, or resurrection*,' except by what Allah has given him and empowered him to do.⁸

Or that circumambulating the grave of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī or Aḥmad al-Badawī constitutes disbelief that expels one from Islam merely due to the

⁸ Here, only a snippet of the verse is quoted as part of the body-text. This appears in 25: 3, and in full reads: 'Yet the disbelievers take as their gods things beneath Him that create nothing, and are themselves created, that can neither harm nor help themselves, and have no control over death, life, or resurrection.'

act itself, by virtue of the circumambulation resembling, outwardly, the circumambulation around the *Ka'ba*, regardless of the belief of the person performing the act concerning 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī or Aḥmad al-Badawī.

Therefore, the relationship between the definition of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and the definition of '*Ibādah* in this second approach is necessarily that '*Ibādah* is the *foundation*'. It is defined as constituting specific actions, thus resulting in a list of certain actions labeled as acts of worship - '*Ibādāt*', with the *ilah* being the one to whom these actions are directed. In short – 'the *ilah* is the one who is worshipped.' This second approach, although free from internal circular reasoning and contradictions, is nevertheless false and cannot be accepted by its proponents, as there is definitive evidence from the authoritative texts of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*—because these are the only valid legal texts—and even before that, from the necessities of sensory perception, reason, and language, which establish with certainty the opposite of what this position suggests.

The deity is the one that is worshipped?

Firstly, as we have explained here in general terms, the matter has been conclusively resolved with rigorous evidence in favour of the first approach to the definition of '*Ibādāt*'. Among the proofs for this are the statement 'the *Ilāh* is the one who is worshipped,' implies that *Uluhiyyah* is not an inherent attribute of Allah, Exalted and Glorified, and that He was not always a deity in eternity. This is plain and explicit *kufr*. The proponents of this position cannot escape this conclusion by claiming: 'the *Ilāh* is the one who is rightfully worshipped,' or 'the *Ilāh* is the one deserving of worship,' because these formulations also imply that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, was not always a deity in eternity. This too is plain and explicit *kufr* and necessitates the denial of the Qur'ān.

This second approach is, in itself, a denial of sensory perception, a contradiction to the consensus of rational people from various linguistic backgrounds, and a rejection of the divine ordering, Glorified and Exalted is He, of worship based on *Uluhiyyah*, as expressed in verses such as:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونَ

*We never sent any Messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so serve Me.'*⁹

إِنَّمَا أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

*I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me and keep up the prayer so that you remember Me.*¹⁰

Secondly, as we will explain in detail, particularly concerning many of the actions that the Wahhāb' sect has falsely and slanderously labeled as acts of worship – *'Ibādāt*, action by action, in a separate chapter, specifically the chapter dedicated to the essence of sanctification and ritual acts of worship.

The third position involves incorporating the concept of *Ilāh* into the definition of *'Ibādah*, such that one might say, for example: '*Ibādah* is everything directed towards an *Ilāh*. Simultaneously, it involves incorporating '*Ibādah* into the definition of *Ilāh*, such that one might say: *the Ilāh* is the one who is worshipped. Consequently, '*Ibādah* cannot be defined until *Ilāh* is defined, and at the same time, *Ilāh* cannot be defined until '*Ibādah* is defined. This is circular reasoning that renders either definition impossible, leaving both terms undefined. The result is nothing more than an empty tautology: '*Ibādah* is '*Ibādah*', a meaningless conclusion with no substance or benefit; similarly: *the Ilāh* is *the Ilāh*. This circular reasoning is subtly present in the writings of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah and Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yaḥyā al-Mu'allimī and it appears frequently in the writings of Wahhābī scholars, both covertly and overtly. This is unsurprising, as they are entirely bankrupt when it comes to the auxiliary sciences, such as linguistics, logic, mathematics, let alone any other rational sciences.

In terms of the fourth position, this involves separating the concept of *Ilāh* from the actions of the worshippers, giving it a definition independent of their actions, while simultaneously classifying certain actions, as actions in and of themselves, as '*Ibādah*, regardless of the perception or belief of the one performing them, as is the case with the second position. This necessarily implies that the worship of anyone other than Allah cannot be *Shirk* unless that 'other' is a deity. This position is a denial of sensory perception, reason,

human nature, and language, and it blatantly contradicts the wording of the Qur'ān wording. It also implies that the Qur'ān is incapable of expressing itself correctly or that it misleads its audience, as seen in the verse: “

أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهُ

‘Worship no one but Allah.’¹¹

According to this view, the verse should have said: ‘*Do not worship any deity except Allah*.’ Exalted is Allah above such claims! This also entails an explicit rejection of the ordering in the verse mentioned previously: ‘*I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me*,’¹² which is only possible if one believes that the Qur'ān is not from Allah - an outright form of *kufr*. I do not know of anyone in the world who has openly adopted this position or followed this path without evasion or subterfuge. This is nothing more than the circular reasoning mentioned in the third position, whether hidden or manifest.

Conclusions

From all that has been previously stated, it becomes clearly evident that the deviant and extremist Wahhābī sect has misclassified certain actions as '*Ibādāt*' - acts of worship, merely based on their external form, or based on a prior belief about harm, benefit, intercession, blessings, proximity, and so forth, without regard to the presence or absence of the specific belief that makes such actions '*Ibādah*', which is the belief in some aspect of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) as properly defined by the Qur'ān. They then passed judgments of *Shirk* and *kufr* on those performing such actions, expelling them from Islam merely based on these acts, and raised the sword against them.

The Wahhābī sect even went so far as to audaciously label this falsehood and blatant lie as *Tawheed*, specifically *Tawheed al-'Ibādah*. They then compounded this crime by referring to it as *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, as can be found, for instance, in '*Iānat al-Mustafid bi-Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawheed* by Ṣalīḥ ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān: ‘Since *Tawheed* is of three types - *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt*, and the majority of this book focuses on the second type, which is *Tawheed al-*

⁹ Qur'ān, 21: 25

¹⁰ Qur'ān, 20: 14

¹¹ Qur'ān, 11: 2

¹² Qur'ān, 20: 14

Ibādah.¹³ Similarly, in ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Rājhi’s *Sharh al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahāwiyyah* he states:

As for *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, it is the oneness of Allah through the actions of worshippers: through your actions, O human, such as prayer, *zakāt*, fasting, pilgrimage, righteousness to parents, maintaining kinship ties—these are your actions. Enjoining good, forbidding evil, refraining from prohibitions, and drawing closer to Allah through these actions, and dedicating them to Allah alone, seeking His face and the hereafter - this is *Tawheed al-‘Ibādah*.¹⁴

In contrast, even the compilers of English dictionaries have fared better, as they defined worship according to its natural and intuitive meaning, stating: ‘A sense of reverence paid to a supernatural or divine being.’¹⁵ Therefore, it is both legally and rationally necessary to affirm that wherever the term *Ibādah* or its derivatives appear in discussions of *Tawheed* and *Shirk*; faith and disbelief, or idols and deities - in the Qur’ān, the Prophetic *Sunnah*, or the speech of the *Salaf*, especially the *Sahāba* who witnessed revelation and had pure hearts and minds - it must be understood as referring to inner states, psychological reactions, physical actions, and verbal expressions that are preceded by a specific belief. That belief, which is in some aspect of *Uluhiyyah* in the object to whom these actions are directed. Any other understanding leads to contradictions, circular reasoning, or denial of sensory and historical realities, and ultimately to a denial of the Qur’ān itself, as in the case of the Wahhābi sect, who wrongly believe they are in the right.

¹³ Ḡālib ibn Fawzān al-Fawzān ‘Iānat al-Mustafid bi-Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawheed [Vol. 3, p. 243].

¹⁴ Abd al-‘Aziz al-Rājhi’s *Sharh al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahāwiyyah* [p. 7]

¹⁵ See the various entries as per the Oxford English Dictionary. Online dictionaries, like Merriam-Webster, carry much the same meaning often with the entries for etymology as being that ‘The sense of reverence paid to a supernatural or divine being - is attested by mid-13c.’

13. Contradictory definitions of al-Mu‘allimī

At this juncture, it is an appropriate time to review and clarify the existing flaws in the definition of *al-Ilāh* – god/deity, and *Ibādah* – worship, as it has been set out by ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Mu‘allimī, may Allah have mercy upon him. To begin, the definition of *Ilāh* is set out in the works of al-Mu‘allimī as follows, where he writes:

(1) With regards to *al-Ilāh* – god/deity, it is *al-Ma’bud* – one that is worshipped. Whomsoever worships something has taken it as an *Ilāh*, even if they don’t claim that it is *mustaḥiqq lil-‘ibādah* - worthy of worship. That applies for example, to those who hope for (some) worldly benefit (deriving therefrom) or similar motivation as previously outlined.

(2) Whoever *za’m* (claims) that something is *mustaḥiqq lil-‘ibādah* – worthy/deserving of worship, has worshipped it by way of this claim, as it entails a form of submission that inherently seeks a hidden benefit. By doing this, they have made it an *Ilāh*. Similarly, whoever affirms for something an independent authority in creation, provision, or similar acts, has linked this authority to the basis of deserving worship, as has been previously established. Likewise, whoever affirms that something can intercede without permission and that its intercession is never rejected, has ascribed to it a form of independent authority in a manner akin to independent governance.

(3) As for the meaning of *Ilāh* in the phrase of the testimony, it signifies *mustaḥiqq lil-‘ibādah* - ‘the one deserving of worship.’ Or, if you

prefer, you may say: ‘That which pure intellect independently perceives as being worthy of submission in pursuit of an unseen benefit.’ Thus, Allah the Exalted is deserving of worship, and sound reason independently recognises His deservingness to be submitted to in pursuit of unseen benefit. The *mushrikeen* however, claimed that idols and other things they worshipped were similarly deserving. They did not make such claims about the *Ka’ba* or the Black Stone because they believed that their reverence for these was only by Allah’s command. Therefore, they did not call the *Ka’ba* a god nor did they describe their reverence for it as worship.¹

In addition to the above, the definition as it purportedly relates to *al-Ibādah* has also been outlined in his works where he states: ‘The refined articulation of the definition of worship is as follows - voluntary submission through which an unseen benefit is sought.’² Regarding the matter of submission, as he has stated, this encompasses both the notion of *Tā’ah* (obedience) and *Ta’dheem* (reverence). The ‘voluntary’ excludes all that would be coerced and matters in similar circumstances, as shall be detailed in the section on legal excuses, if Allah wills. Concerning the matter of an ‘unseen benefit,’ it signifies that it is of such a nature that it includes: a) The one who actively seeks having an actual belief, assumption, or even a mere possibility that this submission is a means to attaining an unseen benefit; b) the one who is considered ‘a seeker,’ such as when a particular act is customarily performed for the sake of obtaining an unseen benefit. An example of this is prostration before an idol, even if the one prostrating does so out of defiance as was the case with Pharaoh and his people. Alternatively, if one prostrates out of fear of harm that does not amount to coercion as was previously discussed in the opening of this treatise in reference to the oppressed believers who exposed themselves to potential coercion out of reluctance to emigrate which would have required them to abandon their homes, wealth, and families. Or, if one prostrates in flattery, which is a lesser evil than the previous case. This is indicated by the verse of Allah, Exalted and Majestic where He says:

¹ *Athār al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Mu’allimī* [Vol. 3, p. 735 (Shamela edition)]. The numbering to distinguish each of the paragraphs is an addition here.

² *Ibid.* [Vol. 3, p. 733 (Shamela edition)].

وَقَدْ نَزَّلْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكَفِّرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزِئُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا
فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّمَا إِذَا يُشَذِّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا

As He has already revealed to you [believers] in the Scripture, if you hear people denying and ridiculing Allah’s revelation, do not sit with them unless they start to talk of other things, or else you yourselves will become like them, Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together into Hell.³

Or, if one prostrates in pursuit of worldly gain, such as one who is offered a great sum of wealth in exchange for prostrating before an idol - this case being even more severe than that of the one who prostrates out of fear. Or, if one prostrates in jest and amusement, as is indicated by the verse on coercion, as previously discussed in the opening of this treatise. The Islamic legal jurists affirm that such an act constitutes apostasy. In relation to ‘benefit,’ this term is intended to include the matter of preventing harm; regarding ‘unseen,’ its explanation has been outlined already.

This is a definition of ‘*Ibādah*, worship, in its general sense. However if one intends to define worship directed to Allah, Exalted and Mighty, the phrase *bi-Sulṭān* (with authority), is added, Conversely, if one intends to define worship directed to other than Him, the phrase *bi-ghayr Sulṭān* (without authority) is appended. Moreover, an act may be considered worship of other than Allah, Exalted is He, yet its performer may be excused in which case he is not to be deemed a *mushrik*, as will be explained, if Allah wills. This is a concise and well-phrased formulation, as noted by the *muhaqqiq* (verifier) whom I believe to be Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd, may Allah have mercy on him in his introduction to *Athār al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Mu’allimī*.

The refined articulation of the definition of worship is as follows: ‘Voluntary submission through which an unseen benefit is sought.’ That is to say, it is of such a nature that the one submitting actively seeks an unseen benefit, believing or assuming that his submission serves as a means to attaining it. The one submitting is considered akin to a seeker, such that the given act is customarily associated with the pursuit of unseen benefit. An example of this is prostration before an idol, if performed: Out of defiance, as was the case with Pharaoh and his people. Out of fear of harm that does not reach the level of

³ *Qur’ān*, 4: 140

coercion; out of flattery, out of desire for worldly gain, such as one who is offered great wealth in exchange for prostrating before an idol. (Or) out of jest and amusement. This definition applies to worship in its general sense. However, if one intends to define worship directed to Allah then the phrase *bi-Sultān* (with authority), is added. And if one intends to define worship directed to other than Him then the phrase *bi-ghayr Sultān* (without authority) is appended.⁴

The explanation of an ‘unseen benefit,’ appears in the *Athār al-Mu'allimī*, where it is stated: ‘By an unseen benefit what is meant is that which occurs contrary to the natural order, which is established through sensory perception and direct observation.’⁵ Thus, let us begin with the third clause of the definition of *al-Ilāh* where it is stated:

As for the meaning of *Ilāh* in the testimony of faith it signifies ‘the one deserving of worship.’ If you wish, you may say: ‘That which pure intellect independently perceives as being worthy of submission in pursuit of an unseen benefit.’ Thus, Allah, Exalted and Blessed is deserving of worship and pure intellect independently perceives His right to be submitted to in pursuit of an unseen benefit..⁶

In light of the above, we would argue that it is necessary here to replace the phrase *mustahiqq lil-ibādah* - ‘deserving of worship’ with our refined formulation, namely: ‘The entity or being characterised by, or possessing the power to that by which worship is deserved.’ This is precisely our definition of *Ilāh*, translated for those who insist upon that reprehensible approach which is the forced insertion of the term *al-ibādah* – worship, into the definition. We have already critiqued this at length yet, for the sake of leniency, avoiding needless disputation and the accusation of excessive rigidity we shall exercise even greater leniency for the sake of brevity and to avoid convoluted and cumbersome phrasing. Thus, we shall say: ‘Deserving of worship’ or

⁴ The Arabic edition doesn’t clearly define where this excerpt quote is taken from. It is from *Athār al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Mu'allimī*, from the book as it relates to removing the doubts regarding the meaning of the terms ‘worship’ and ‘god,’ (*Raf’ul-Ishtibāhi ‘an Ma’na al-Ibādah wal Ilāh*) [Vol. 3, pp. 33/34 (Shamela edition)].

⁵ *Athār al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Mu'allimī* [Vol. 3, p. 731 (Shamela edition)]

⁶ Op. Cit [Vol. 3, p. 35]. Again, the Arabic edition doesn’t clearly define where this excerpt quote is taken from.

alternatively, ‘the rightfully worshipped.’ However, we must firmly uphold the meaning contained within the expanded formulation: ‘The entity characterised by, possessing the power to that by which worship is deserved.’ The necessity of this replacement becomes evident when we recognise that Allah, Majestic and Exalted is an *Ilāh* eternally. He is the *Ilāh* of all people and indeed, of all created beings with absolute certainty by, a) the necessity of sensory perception; b) the necessity of reason, c) the explicit text of the Qur’ān, and d) the consensus of rational human beings and even those among them who may be insane. Even the atheists who deny the existence of Allah do not dispute the meaning of *Ilāh*; rather, they only deny the existence of an *Ilāh*. The testimony of faith affirms that Allah is *Ilāh* and expressly negates the existence of any *Ilāh* besides Him. Thus, if we were to define *Ilāh* as *al-Ma’bud bi-haqq* - ‘the rightfully worshipped,’ or even *mustahiqq lil-ibādah* ‘the one deserving of worship,’ it would lead to falsehoods and heinous blasphemies which we have already disproved in previous chapters. Rather, the Islamic testimony of faith must be articulated as follows:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ = [لَا يَوْجِدُ إِلَّا الْبَيْتَ، إِلَّا وَاحِدًا هُوَ اللَّهُ] = [لَا يَوْجِدُ إِلَّا الْبَيْتَ (كَائِنٌ هُوَ الْمُتَصَفُّ بِمَا، أَوْ
الْقَادِرُ عَلَى مَا تُسْتَحْقُّ بِهِ (الْعِبَادَةِ) إِلَّا وَاحِدًا هُوَ اللَّهُ]

Lā (Ilāh) illa Allāh = There exists no (*Ilāh*) whatsoever except for One and He is Allah] = There exists absolutely nothing that is characterised by, or possesses the power to that by which worship is deserved except for One, and He is Allah.

Thus, we have before us this category of ‘*Ilāh*’s of the highest degree.’ those who are ‘rightfully worshipped’ employing leniency in phrasing. Yet, in truth, on the basis of definitive proofs these entities are either a) totally non-existent having no existence whatsoever beyond the distorted imaginations of the *mushrikeen*; or, b) beings that do, or once did, exist, but not possessing the attributes that the *mushrikeen* claim for them. That is, except for One – Allah, the Almighty, Exalted. At this juncture, we need not concern with the detailed definition of worship. Rather, it suffices that worship has been correctly defined in some valid manner. Now, let us return to the definition of *Ilāh* as presented in the cited text. Upon examination, we find that the second clause previously quoted, which states:

(2) Whoever *za'm* (claims) that something is *mustahiqq lil-'ibādah* – worthy/deserving of worship, has worshipped it by way of this claim, as it entails a form of submission that inherently seeks a hidden benefit. By doing this, they have made it an *Ilāh*. Similarly, whoever affirms for something an independent authority in creation, provision, or similar acts, has linked this authority to the basis of deserving worship, as has been previously established. Likewise, whoever affirms that something can intercede without permission and that its intercession is never rejected, has ascribed to it a form of independent authority in a manner akin to independent governance.⁷

To this I would argue that this is of utmost importance for it establishes that merely ascribing the right to be worshipped to something or affirming that something possesses independent governance over creation, sustenance, and similar matters, or affirming that something intercedes without permission and that its intercession is never rejected. It renders this very attribution an act of worship toward that entity. This is precisely our position or, to phrase it more accurately it is part of our position, and it is the truth irrespective of how worship is defined in detail. However, al-Mu'allimī has fallen into circular reasoning without realising it when he states: ‘Whoever *za'm* (claims) that something is worthy/deserving of worship, has worshipped it by way of this claim...’⁸ For in reality, merely attributing the right to be worshipped to something is itself worship of that entity. This is precisely what the Wahhābi's refer to as ‘doctrinal worship’ as al-Mu'allimī himself explicitly stated. Thus, what was required was for him to state: ‘Whoever claims that something is worthy/deserving of worship, has worshipped it by way of this claim, as it entails a form of submission that inherently seeks a hidden benefit.’ This would be the lenient phrasing. Alternatively, in more stringent he should have stated: ‘Whoever claims that something is an *Ilāh*, meaning that it is characterised by or possesses the power to that by which voluntary submission through which unseen benefit is sought - is deemed due, has, by necessity, submitted to it, even if not in actual deed. Thus, he is its worshipper, meaning that he has worshipped it.’ This is instead of the contradictory statement as

⁷ See footnote (1). Essentially this quote is repeated from the beginning of the chapter.

⁸ The Arabic edition re-quotes the entire quote. That repetition is omitted here for the English translation.

mentioned earlier, point (2).⁹ For the phrase ‘and by this, he has rendered it an *Ilāh*,’ is meaningless as he had already initially claimed that it was an *Ilāh* of this particular category, namely, the ‘highest degree.’ Thus, he then proceeded to act upon this alleged *Ilāh*, and according to al-Mu'allimī’s assertion it was by this act that he made it an *Ilāh*. This necessarily implies that it was not an *Ilāh* before this final act of making it so. The result, then, is a contradiction - that the entity was an *Ilāh* and was not an *Ilāh* at the same time and from the same perspective. What appears to me is that this is merely a formal circularity arising from faulty sentence construction. The correct approach would have been to construct two independent statements, which can be formulated as follows:

1. Whoever claims that something is deserving of worship, has, by that very claim, worshipped it; thus, he has rendered it an *Ilāh*, for an *Ilāh* is that which is deserving of worship.
2. Ascribing the right to be worshipped to something inherently entails, in and of itself, a form of submission through which an unseen benefit is sought. Thus, the attribution itself is an act of worship of the entity to whom it is ascribed.

There is no doubt that ascribing divinity to anything constitutes worship of that entity - necessarily and inevitably. Otherwise, mere ascription of divinity to anything other than Allah would not have been deemed *Shirk* and *Kufr*, as is necessitated by the dictates of reason, the explicit texts of the Qur'ān the definitive consensus of the people of Islam - a fact acknowledged by al-Mu'allimī himself. Thus, the principle that ‘merely ascribing divinity to anything other than Allah is *Shirk* and *Kufr*’ is a necessary condition for the correctness of the definition of *al 'Ibādah* – worship. According to our definition there is no issue, for in our formulation, we hold that the following is established, namely:

عبدة غير الله = نسبة شيء من الألوهية لغير الله = الشرك بالله

⁹ Here rather confusingly, the Arabic edition again re-quotes the statement from al-Mu'allimī in full. The repetition is omitted here from the translation.

Worship of other than Allah = Ascribing divinity to anything other than Allah =
Shirk with Allah

However, in al-Mu'allimī's definition he defines worship otherwise, as mentioned previously. Yet this definition is not inherently clear. For this reason, he found himself, may Allah pardon him compelled to argue 'Whoever *za'm* (claims) that something is *mustahiqq lil-ibādah* – worthy/deserving of worship, has worshipped it by way of this claim,' etc. This is highly problematic, for mere ascription does not necessarily imply submission, at least as it appears to me at first glance. Likewise, mere affirmation does not necessarily entail submission as is evident from the case of Iblees and the people of Pharaoh. Rather, submission only follows after testifying to the divinity of something, because such a testimony inherently entails acknowledgment, acceptance, and submission. Therefore, al-Mu'allimī's definition of worship suffers from a major for it fails to satisfy the necessary condition mentioned above - his definition does not apply in its given form to the 'highest degree' of *Ilāh*. Thus, it is an incomplete definition, and is therefore invalid. Looked at from another perspective, Dr Hātim al-'Awni, may Allah preserve him, raised a significant objection to al-Mu'allimī's definition of worship on his official platform on Facebook. Therein, he mentioned the following:

If a man submits to a created being, seeking to save his son from the hands of thieves who stand before him and seize his son, this is not an 'unseen matter.' However, if he submits to this created being believing that it exercises control over the universe independently of Allah's permission, in the manner of the Lord, the Owner, and the Disposer of affairs then, according to al-Mu'allimī's definition, he would not be considered a *mushrik*, because he did not 'seek an unseen benefit.'

In response to the above, I would argue that al-Mu'allimī has already judged this asserting that such a person has worshipped the one to whom he submitted. Moreover, he has rendered him an *Ilāh* other than Allah. This ruling is based solely on the attribution of independent control over the universe to that being without Allah's permission. Thus, the one submitting is a *mushrik kāfir*, without exception. However, this is not the core issue,

rather the matter at hand is the validity or invalidity of al-Mu'allimī's definition of worship. And the invalidity of this definition, particularly with respect to *Ilāh*'s of the highest degree, is as evident as the sun at midday. This is due to the absence of an unseen benefit. Whatever the case may be, there is fundamentally no necessity to establish a precise definition of worship at least in relation to *Ilāh*'s of the highest degree, except for the essential inclusion within the definition of worship of - the mere ascription of the right to be worshipped to something. This would ensure that the mere attribution itself constitutes worship of the one to whom it is ascribed, and that it amounts to *Shirk* and *Kufr* if it is ascribed to any entity other than Allah.

There is another significant issue with the wording which al-Mu'allimī uses, in relation to the latter half of point (2) quote above, where he writes: 'Similarly, whoever affirms for something an independent authority in creation, provision, or similar acts, has linked this authority to the basis of deserving worship, as has been previously established,' etc. This statement fails to mention the most dangerous type of *Ilāh*'s among the Quraysh and other nations, namely, 'beings' which were ascribed and attributed to godly or divine lineage, and secondly, 'beings' that were claimed to belong to a divine species or genus. Thus, it would have been more appropriate for him not to limit the first sentence exclusively to governance over creation and sustenance. Rather, he should have stated: 'Similarly, whoever affirms something performs an action by its own intrinsic power, independently, particularly in relation to acts of creation, provision, exaltation, subjugation, perception, and other such attributes.' Furthermore, his formulation should have incorporated additional critical examples of instances where actual *Shirk* has occurred. For example, whoever affirmed that something can grant asylum from Allah, protecting someone from His punishment; whoever were to affirm that something can conceal itself from Allah, escape His grasp, or evade Him by flight, and whoever were to affirm that something possesses absolute sovereignty, such that it legislates and governs without any authority above it necessitating absolute obedience.

Returning to al-Mu'allimī's first clause, listed as (1) above – 'With regards to *al-Ilāh* – god/deity, it is *al-Ma'bud* – one that is worshipped. Whomsoever worships something has taken it as an *Ilāh*,' etc. This is highly problematic. According to our definition of *Ilāh* and *al-Ibādah*, this type of which we shall call it – '*Ilāh*'s of the second degree,' is entirely impossible.

His statement: 'Even if he does not claim that it is deserving of worship,' does not hold and the proper wording should be: 'Even if he claims that it is not deserving of worship.' For any given entity must either be, a) not deserving of worship, or b) deserving of worship. These are two mutually exclusive, contradictory states, and there is no intermediary between them. Those 'deserving of worship' are what we previously classified as '*Ilāh*'s of the highest degree.' This category has already been discussed and it is entirely distinct. In fact, it is the direct opposite of the 'second-degree *Ilāh*'s.'

There is a logical impossibility of worship being detached completely from *a priori* belief. Even with the revised wording the statement remains problematic. A rational person may well say – 'I smiled at him despite knowing he does not deserve my warmth, but I did so out of diplomacy and courtesy,' or 'I punished him despite knowing that he was not proven guilty, nor did he deserve punishment, but I did so to deter the wicked and preserve state authority.' Such statements are conceivable. However, for a rational person, especially a Muslim to say: 'I worshipped it, despite knowing that it is not deserving of worship,' is utterly implausible. For the matter of worship - *al-Ibādah*, is of the utmost gravity to anyone who believes in the Hereafter, the reward of paradise and the punishment of hell. This is a matter of life and death, thus, the situation must fall into one of two scenarios only, the first, the person actually worshipped it. If so, then he must be lying when he claims to believe that it is not deserving of worship. Secondly, the person truly believes it is not *deserving* of worship. In this case, he must be denying that his action constitutes worship of that entity.

Therefore, we can conclude that the definition which al-Mu'allimī formulated is fundamentally flawed. For either the person is lying about his belief or he does not actually consider his action to be worship. In both cases, the logic of the definition collapses. One will notice that there is an inherent contradiction and a form of circular reasoning whether subtle or explicit. This cannot be resolved except by recognising that the insertion of the phrase '*deserving of worship*' is the root of the issue. Thus, what was necessary for al-Mu'allimī if he were to insist on defining it at all was to state: 'As for the *Ilāh* it is simply the one who is worshipped. Whoever worships something has thereby taken it as an *Ilāh*, regardless of his beliefs concerning it. And worship being is defined as: 'Voluntary submission through which an unseen benefit is sought.' There is no need for examples such as 'for instance, one

who seeks a worldly benefit and the like,' for such illustrations introduce more confusion than clarity. Additionally, it is necessary to append that this applies only to *Ilāh*'s of the category where none are believed to be the entity characterised by, or the one possessing the power to that by which worship is deemed due. This is necessary to avoid contradiction which would otherwise invalidate the second and third clauses of his definition of worship as previously explained. With this refinement we may have escaped the circular reasoning that was previously identified. However, have we truly arrived at a coherent and beneficial definition? Consider first this striking example:

The correct position is that the general statement of the scholars of the *madhab* is that prostration to one's parents and similar cases do not constitute apostasy should be understood only in cases where the person prostrates without holding a religious conviction regarding the prostration and without claiming that it brings an unseen benefit. Rather, he prostrates due to a natural or customary inclination or for a particular purpose, such as one who prostrates to a ruler to be granted leadership, or to receive financial compensation. In such a case, this bears no resemblance to the prostration of the *mushrikeen* to their deities, as is evident. As for the one who prostrates to his parents as a religious act seeking an unseen benefit, then this is precisely the act of the *mushrikeen*.¹⁰

Immediately following this, the commentator of *Athār al-Mu'allimī*, provides the following footnote on the same page as the text:

Previously, in the definition of worship on pages 733-734 it was established that seeking an unseen benefit is not a condition for prostration to an idol. Rather, even if one prostrates out of defiance, or out of worldly incentive, such as one who is offered a great sum of wealth to prostrate to an idol, or if he does so mockingly, all of these cases constitute apostasy, and jurists affirm apostasy based on his very words. It appears that the author is not concerned with the mere act of prostration, but rather with the object of prostration. Thus, he distinguishes between, an idol, whose worshippers generally seek an

¹⁰ *Athār al-Mu'allimī* [Vol. 3, p. 747 (Shamela edition)].

unseen benefit and a human ruler for whom prostration is not commonly associated with seeking an unseen benefit. Thus, he conditions *takfir* in the case of a human ruler upon the seeker. However, he did not impose such a condition for prostration to an idol.'

In response to the above, I would argue the following – do you see the contradiction and ambiguity which indicate the invalidity of this definition within this brief text? Firstly, there is the contradiction in the requirement of an ‘unseen benefit.’ At times, seeking an unseen benefit is presented as a necessary condition, while at other times it is not required. Both the commentator, may Allah have mercy on him and Dr Hātim al-‘Awnī have noticed this discrepancy, both are correct in that. Secondly, comes the undefined concept of ‘non-religious prostration.’ What does it even mean to prostrate ‘without religious conviction’ toward one’s parents? There are some critical issues here. What is ‘religiosity’ in this particular context? If ‘religiosity’ here means ‘worship,’ then inevitably this leads to circularity of reasoning or to infinite regress. If ‘religiosity’ doesn’t mean worship, what is it exactly referring to then? Thirdly, there is the matter regarding the unmentioned essential attributes of the worshipped. The definition provided by al-Mu'allimī doesn’t include any mention of the essential attributes of the entity worshipped. Why, then, does the ‘object of prostration’ suddenly appear from the backdoor unexpectedly? Fourth, there is a notable absence of a concrete example regarding the scenario – ‘whoever prostrates to his parents as a religious act seeking an unseen benefit.’ I have failed to identify any example of what an ‘unseen benefit’ could be sought here that would render such an act *Shirk*. Moreover, al-Mu'allimī has provided no example either.

Following on from this, additional points must be made. To begin, it does not appear that defining worship as: ‘Voluntary submission through which an unseen benefit is sought,’ satisfies the necessary condition mentioned above, namely: ‘The mere ascription of divinity to anything other than Allah constitutes *Shirk* and *Kufr*.’ The use of the passive construction in the phrasing: ‘*Through which an unseen benefit is sought*,’ renders the definition ambiguous. Who exactly is seeking this unseen benefit? Is it sought from the one to whom submission is directed? Or is it sought from Allah? Or from some third entity? What is naturally established in human disposition when

speaking of worship, religion and religiosity and deities is as follows – a) the one worshipped is the one to whom submission is directed; b) the benefit is sought from the one to whom submission is directed.

Next, concerning the addition mentioned: ‘If the definition of worship of Allah is intended, then the phrase ‘with authority’ should be added. Or if the definition of worship of other than Allah is intended, then the phrase ‘without authority’ should be added.’ This is highly problematic, for what is firmly established in human nature is that ‘the one worshipped’ is the one to whom submission is directed. If this is acknowledged then the phrase ‘with authority’ does not apply to worship of Allah, except to distinguish legitimate worship from innovated worship and nothing more. Otherwise, all worship of Allah is the worship of Allah. However, if the discussion concerns worship directed to *other* than Allah, then human nature vehemently rejects the notion that such worship could ever be ‘with authority.’ As we have elaborated when discussing the meaning of Allah’s statement:

وَأَنْ شَرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنْزَلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانٌ

*And that you associate with Allah that for which He has not sent down any authority.*¹¹

This is discussed in a separate dedicated chapter. It appears that al-Mu'allimī is entangled in the implication that Allah could send down authority for *Shirk* - we seek refuge in Allah from such a claim.

The definition of ‘unseen benefit’ lacks precision. For what is unseen to Zayd may be witnessed by ‘Amr. However, al-Mu'allimī seeks to include within this definition *al-Istighātha bil-Amwāt*, the supplication or calling upon the dead. Yet he will not succeed in this effort, as will be demonstrated in our detailed analysis in the next volume which covers the essence of veneration and ritual acts of worship. Rather, true unseen benefit is: ‘That which a being accomplishes by its own intrinsic power independently.’ This is what truly violates the system of ‘nature’ whether in the physical world, the afterlife; the nature of angels, and the reality of heaven and hell. This is unseen for every being within the realm of ‘nature’ and none can accomplish such an act except, the One who fashioned nature, the One who is necessarily beyond nature.

¹¹ *Qur'ān*, 4: 140

Thus, the matter ultimately returns to one's belief concerning the being to whom submission is directed. Furthermore, Dr Hātim al-'Awni, may Allah preserve him, raised another objection regarding al-Mu'allimī's definition of worship on his online platform (Facebook). He stated:

According to this definition if a man were to prostrate to Christ and prostration to beings other than Allah was permissible among the Children of Israel, and he submitted to him in the same manner as a believer in Allah would submit before the Spirit of Allah and His Word and Messenger, seeking that Christ would revive his son, inform him of his past provisions, or heal him from blindness or leprosy that humans are incapable of curing. If he were to kiss Christ's hand and supplicate him humbly to do such acts, then according to this, he has worshipped Christ and committed *Shirk*. Yet, this man has merely believed in what Christ himself informed them: '*He will send him as a messenger to the Children of Israel: "I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I will make the shape of a bird for you out of clay, then breathe into it and, with Allah's permission, it will become a real bird; I will heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead back to life with Allah's permission; I will tell you what you may eat and what you may store up in your houses. There truly is a sign for you in this, if you are believers,*' [3: 49]. This demonstrates that not every voluntary submission seeking an unseen matter constitutes *Shirk*.

Ustādh Māhir Ameer raised an objection to this, saying:

Shaykh Hātim, may Allah preserve you if you had restricted your statement with the condition he himself mentioned, namely, 'with authority or without authority,' the apparent inconsistency would be removed. The submission in both cases is worship of Allah because it is 'with authority' that establishes the submission as a cause for unseen benefit. Moreover, the submission to them is also governed by authority, otherwise, it would be an excess without authority and thus *Shirk*. al-Mu'allimī has responded to a similar issue that resembles your point, so as not to assume this misunderstanding. His definition does not differ substantially from others in meaning but is more precise. Submission or humility is linguistically worship, and its

regulation lies in seeking unseen benefit, which is inherently exclusive to Allah. What do you think? May Allah preserve you.

In reply, Dr Hātim al-'Awni said: 'He did not condition it with the restriction you mentioned and his definition of worship is entirely devoid of this restriction. The restriction you mention is not for defining but for defining the worship that is specific to Allah.' Responding in turn, Ustādh Māhir Ameer wrote:

Yes, you are right, but that is the subject of inquiry, namely, *al-Ibādah al-Māhmūdah* (legitimate worship) and its opposite, *qiddūhā al-Shirkīyyah* (idolatrous worship). The question, as I understand it, is: When does submission seeking unseen benefit constitute *Shirk*, and when is it for Allah? Thus, this restriction could remove the perceived inconsistency. There is no doubt that you have reviewed what he responded to in your inquiry on p.736. Do you have any particular insight that led you not to accept it thereby justifying mentioning the objection as a flaw, even though he explained how it constitutes submission to Allah with no inconsistency or *Shirk*?

With this, as far as I know, the discussion concluded and Allah knows best. Thus, I say, as follows - what must be decisively affirmed is the following, firstly, this man submitted to Christ with absolute certainty seeking unseen benefit. Here, the agent of benefit is Christ himself, peace be upon him. Secondly, submission and humility constitute worship linguistically, meaning that the one submitted to is necessarily the one worshipped in this instance, linguistically. Even if we accept al-Mu'allimī's conditions, we cannot negate the objective, sensory reality which is, the man submitted to Christ. The man worshipped Christ according to al-Mu'allimī's definition. At most, what al-Mu'allimī's condition can offer us is that this worship of Christ was 'with authority.' Thus, it remains at the same time worship of Allah. However, the fact that it is worship of Allah does not negate that it is also worship of Christ, unless, of course, one is willing to indulge in linguistic manipulation thereby collapsing into the abyss of Qarmatian doctrines, or into sophistry in rational matters. Thus the conclusion of this would be:

عبدة الله + عبادة للمسيح = شراكة بضرورة الحس والعقل = شرك

Worship of Allah + Worship of Christ = Partnership by necessity of sense and reason = *Shirk*

And I hasten to add that this is a permissible *Shirk* indeed a praiseworthy *Shirk* since both acts of worship are praiseworthy. If this is acceptable to al-Mu'allimī and Ustādh Māhir Ameer, then all praise is due to Allah. As for us, we say: this is an invalid definition of worship. This believer who submitted to Christ prostrated before him and rubbed his face upon the ground at his feet seeking unseen benefit, never worshipped Christ at all. Thus, his submission in seeking unseen benefit is not worship. Nor is it permissible to call it worship. Rather, it is prohibited by Islamic law to designate it as 'worship.' For doing so removes a legal term from its legal meaning. This constitutes the distortion of words from their proper places, and we seek refuge in Allah from that. Moreover, it removes the term from its linguistic meaning. This is a violation of the integrity of the Arabic language, a usurpation and an act that corrupts the understanding of the Qur'ān. For the Qur'ān was revealed in a clear Arabic tongue. Likewise, submission in itself is not worship of Allah. For the man, at the moment of the act, did not even think of drawing near to Allah. Rather, his sole intention was to revive his deceased or to heal his sick nothing more. He had indeed worshipped Allah when he testified to Christ's Prophethood, thereby affirming Allah's sovereignty. Thus, he became a believer, a worshipper and a monotheist and not a *mushrik*. This remains his permanent state. However, his submission in that particular moment, in that particular place, is merely a permissible action. Had he chosen to forgo it, it would have been permissible to leave it. It was not an act of worship since he did not intend to draw nearer to Allah through that specific action, nor did it result in any additional submission to Allah. Even though without the slightest doubt he remains in a state of perpetual submission to Allah due to his faith, just as when a person eats his intention is merely to satisfy hunger. Or when he relieves himself, he does so to fulfill the body's right by eliminating impurities. Neither of these actions removes him from his continuous state of submission to Allah as necessitated by his faith. Thus, all of this necessitates discarding al-Mu'allimī's definition entirely. And may peace, mercy, and the blessings of Allah descend upon you.

In any case we shall continue our examination of the example of prostration whether to one's parents, to an idol, or otherwise in the next volume of this present series. Furthermore, we shall thoroughly analyse numerous actions that the Wahhābi's falsely and slanderously designate as acts of worship, thereby declaring those who perform them to be disbelievers who are outside the fold of Islam. We shall also continue to demonstrate the invalidity of al-Mu'allimī's definitions, as well as those of the Wahhābi's in general concerning the matter of *al-Ibādah* – worship, and *al-Ilāh* - god/deity. This will be done without the slightest doubt, by the permission of Allah, upon Whom we rely and through Whom we seek assistance. But how did all this alarming confusion arise? The root of the crisis lies in the fact that Ibn Taymiyyah, whether justly or unjustly denounced certain statements and actions, such as *al-istighāthah bi-l-awliyā* - seeking intercession through the saints and *al-tawāfiq bi-qubūrihim*, circumambulating their graves.

Overcome by excessive zeal and a pathological obsession with *Deen*, he lost sight of the warning of our master, Abul-Qāsim, Muḥammad ibn Abdullah, the Seal of the Prophets, upon whom and his family be prayers, salutations, and blessings from Allah. He said, advising and showing compassion: '*Beware of excess in Deen, for indeed what destroyed those before you was excess in Deen.*' Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah applied verses that were revealed concerning the *mushrikeen* which described their actions, actions that merely bore an outward resemblance to the acts of those he labelled 'grave worshippers.' He did so while neglecting Allah's command:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخُرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ؛ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ؛ وَلَا تَنْهَرُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ؛ وَلَا تَتَابُرُوا بِالْأَنْقَابِ؛ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفَسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتَبَرَّ فَأُولَئِنَّكُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*O You who believe, no one group of men should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; no one group of women should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; do not speak ill of one another; do not use offensive nicknames for one another. How bad it is to be called a mischief-maker after accepting faith! Those who do not repent of this behaviour are evildoers.*¹²

¹² Qur'ān, 49: 11

Thus, he applied these verses to the people of Islam exactly as did the early *Khawārij*. This was because he read the Qur'an superficially without true understanding, without absorption, without comprehension, and without deep contemplation or enlightened thought. It was the reading of those 'who recite the Qur'an, but it does not pass beyond their throats;' those who 'devote themselves to worship, and toil in it; they seek to impress people, and they are impressed with themselves.' Those about whom it was said: 'You would consider your own prayer and fasting insignificant compared to theirs.' Thus, he disregarded the historical context in which these verses were revealed. Among its most essential components was the theological doctrines of the *mushrikeen*. To make matters worse, Ibn Taymiyyah lacked extensive knowledge regarding the true nature of *Shirk* among the Arabs. Despite boasting otherwise as seen in his words, set out in *Iqtidā' al-Sirāt al-Mustaqeem*, where he said:

Whomsoever wishes to learn about the conditions of the *mushrikeen* in their worship of *Awthān* (idols); to understand the reality of *Shirk*, associating partners with Allah – a matter that Allah has condemned in its different guises; in order to understand the *ta'weel* (interpretation) of the Qur'ān, to know what Allah and His Messenger have rebuked, one should look into the *Seerah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. And (concerning) the condition of the Arabs during his time, to consider what al-Azraqi has mentioned (in his book) *Akhbār Makkah*, and other than him from the scholars.¹³

At the same time, the man, in stark contrast to the compound ignorance of MIAW, as among the intellectual elites of the world and the preservers of the *Sunnah*. He had notable contributions in the sciences of logic, *kalām* and *taṣawwuf*, and even made some original additions. Moreover, he possessed exceptional skill in debate along with an audacity in making grand claims such as his habitual assertion 'This is the view of the *Salaf*', or, even more extreme: 'This is the doctrine of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.' This occurred in an era when the memorisation of classical texts and their commentaries was widespread, and scholarly discourse was limited to repeating the statements of predecessors. However, he distinguished himself

¹³ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā' al-Sirāt al-Mustaqeem* [Vol. 2, p. 289]

from the majority of scholars of his time who were confined to their ivory towers by engaging in public affairs, confronting rulers and fighting the Mongols. Thus, there was no one who could restrain him. As a result, he emerged before the people with his innovation which consisted of inverting the principles of divinity and lordship along with his accursed and heinous tripartite division. To Allah belongs the ultimate prerogative of command.

14. The relationship between Divinity and Lordship

Here it is important to provide some further elaboration on the relationship as it exists between *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *al-Rububiyyah* (lordship). Firstly, it becomes clear that every *Ilāh* (deity) is necessarily a *Rabb* (lord and master), either through creation, domination, and ownership, or by noble lineage, high-standing ancestry, and an elevated divine origin. However, the reverse does not hold true - not every *Rabb* is an *Ilāh*, as there exist numerous lords and masters in existence other than Allah in reality. Yet, their lordship and mastery are finite, created, not eternal, acquired, dependent, and not intrinsic in an independent sense. Their authority is contingent, conditioned by Allah's decree - whether cosmic, legal, or both—and not inherent or original.

Thus, if one were to claim that 'there is no *lord* except Allah,' 'there is no *owner* except Allah' or 'there is no *master* except Allah,' such statements would be erroneous if left unqualified. A qualifier is necessary, such as: 'There is no lord in his essence independently except Allah,' or 'There is no lord with absolute lordship except Allah,' or similar expressions. Alternatively, the context may clarify the intended meaning, as is often stated in this book regarding Allah, Glorified be His Majesty: 'There is no deity except Him, and no lord besides Him.' This context obligates the understanding that the lord mentioned here is a *Rabb* in the essential and independent sense, meaning, necessarily, Allah the Almighty, the All-Wise.

There are many lords, masters, and owners, but there is only one *Rabb* whose lordship and sovereignty are inherent, perfect, and absolute, independent of any other, Blessed be His Names and Exalted be His Station.

Indeed, there are also lords, masters, and owners *besides* Allah, whose essences and entities exist in reality. However, they have overstepped their bounds by legislating without permission from Allah, thereby becoming *Tāghut*. Alternatively, their followers have exaggerated their status and taken them as legislators beside Allah, thus regarding them as lords besides Allah. Without doubt, all of these have set up rivals to Allah and have taken deities besides Allah. But their ascription of such status to themselves, or their followers' ascription of it to them as something they supposedly deserve, is falsehood and deception. It exists only in their minds or in the sick minds of their followers. Although these tyrants or leaders have indeed practiced legislation beside Allah in reality, and their entities and legislations do exist outside of mere thought in the universe, their false claims to authority, their supposed sovereignty or their alleged right have no real existence—neither from their own intrinsic merits, as their lordship is not absolute or independent, nor by delegation from Allah, who refutes this with His statement:

وَلَا يُشَرِّكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

And He does not share His rule with anyone.¹

Truthfully and rightfully: eternally and forever. Thus, the concept of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity), or *Ilāhiyyah* (godhood), according to its correct Qur'anic definition, is the broader concept, encompassing within it the notion of *al-Rububiyyah*. When the two are mentioned together in a single context, a distinction must be made. However, when *al-Rububiyyah* is mentioned alone, it is commonly understood by people to be equivalent to *Ilāhiyyah*. This is akin to the saying: *al-Uluhiyyah* and *al-Rububiyyah* when they are combined, they diverge in meaning; but when they are mentioned separately, they converge. Although this expression is not entirely precise and is best avoided, especially in light of the fact that Ibn Taymiyyah has so greatly corrupted these two concepts that their rectification is scarcely possible anymore. To Allah we belong, and to Him we shall return. Therefore, *Rububiyyah* is part of *Uluhiyyah*—in fact, it is its backbone—and upon it rests

¹ *Qur'ān*, 18: 26

the covenant of the *fitra* (innate nature), and it is upon this basis that the first questions in the grave will be asked.

Secondly, it becomes clear with certainty that: ‘*There is no god but Allah*,’ this statement is absolute and requires no further cautionary additions. There is no deity whatsoever in existence except Allah. These are mere names without realities behind them - names which Allah has sent no authority for. Whoever is named a deity by people other than Allah is nothing but an illusion and superstition that exists solely in the minds of those who falsely claim it. Their deviant imaginations create such entities, rendering them *false deities*, mere fabrications of the mind, much like the mind’s estimation of impossibilities:

- Such entities do not exist as actual beings or realities outside of mental estimation;
- And even if their actual forms existed or had once existed in the external world, they never possessed nor will ever possess the qualities, status, or merit by which they were falsely named as *Ilah* (deity).

Therefore, phrases such as ‘*There is no deity truly worthy of worship except Allah*,’ or ‘*There is no god deserving of worship except Allah*,’ —and similar expressions - are meaningless and defective. Such phrases are frequently found in the erroneous and confused translations of the testimony of faith by the sect of Wahhābism into foreign languages.

Thirdly, it becomes certain that the fact that Allah, Glorified be His Majesty, is the complete *Rabb* (Lord) with full *Rububiyyah* (lordship), the absolute master with unrestricted sovereignty, and the rightful owner of true and complete dominion, is because He is the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, the Necessarily Existent, eternal and everlasting, who created from nothing. He created for His own sake, not for the sake of anything else, for there was nothing else before creation, absolutely. Thus, *creatorship* is the most specific attribute of *Ilāhiyyah* (godhood), as was grasped by the scholars of *kalām* (Islamic theology) in accordance with the *fitra* (innate nature), guided by the verses of the Qur’ān, particularly the verse of ‘*Tamānu* (mutual hindrance), upon which they unanimously agreed - before the advent of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah with his egregious innovation, accusing the scholars of *kalām* of negligence, and falsely attributing his objectionable innovation to the righteous predecessors – the *Salaf*, who are free of such a claim.

As for *Rububiyyah*, in its correct Qur’ānic meaning, it derives from and is a branch of *Ilāhiyyah*, in its proper Qur’ānic meaning, not the other way around. It was the grievous misstep of Abu al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah that led to this catastrophic and terrible error. We seek refuge in Allah from “the slips of the scholars, the arguments of the hypocrites with the Book, and the rulings of misguided leaders.”

Fourthly, it becomes certain that testifying to Allah’s *Hākimiyah* (sovereignty), which is the pinnacle of *Rububiyyah*, is the essence of *Tawheed* and the complete realisation of the servitude for which humans and *Jinn* were created. Thus, when a person says, ‘*My Lord is Allah*,’ they immediately acknowledge that they are an obedient and submissive servant of Allah, worshipping Him, and implicitly affirm that their God is Allah alone, without partner, and that there is no creator but Allah - necessarily and without exception. Therefore, the covenant of the *fitra* (innate nature) was established in this manner:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَسْنَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتَ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهَدْنَا أَنَّ
تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins, their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said: ‘Yes, we have testified.’²

The questioning in the grave will also follow this format: ‘Who is your Lord?’ ‘Who is your Prophet?’ ‘What is your *Deen*?’ This alone suffices to demolish the egregious tripartite categorisation, and to obliterate the vile Wahhābi falsehood that ‘The disbelievers of Quraysh and the disbelievers of the Arabs acknowledged *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*.’ This is a strong slap in the face of the foolish adherents of the Wahhabi sect! In any case, even Imām Ibn Taymiyyah himself is inconsistent and contradictory in this matter. Take, for example, his statement:

His saying: ‘*There is no god but You*,’ affirms His uniqueness in *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood), and *al-Ilāhiyyah* entails the perfection of His knowledge, power, mercy, and wisdom. It thus affirms His kindness

² Qur’ān, 7: 172

to the servants, for the *Ilah* (deity) is the one who is worshipped, and the *Ma'lūh* (worshipped one) is the one who deserves to be worshipped. And His deserving to be worshipped is due to His attributes, which necessitate that He is the object of ultimate love and ultimate submission. Worship entails ultimate love alongside ultimate humility.³

The distorted definition of *al-Uluhiyyah* by Imām Ibn Taymiyyah is, in reality, a form of ‘sophistry in rational matters and *Qarmatianism* in transmitted ones.’ This is the famous expression that he frequently employed, and which he unjustly used to reject certain opponents in the barren and pedantic debates over the divine names and attributes. He was thus punished with the very thing he accused his opponents of: ‘*Do not gloat over the misfortune of your brother, lest Allah relieve him and afflict you*,’ and we ask Allah for protection and well-being in this world and the hereafter.⁴

The core issue lies firstly in correctly defining *Ilah* (deity), followed by a correct definition of the term *Ibādah* (worship), and then connecting these two concepts in a sound and coherent manner. This can only be achieved by taking the Qur’ān as the primary source, discarding other interpretations, and contemplating it with deep, enlightened thought. Reading it with thorough digestion and comprehension, unlike the superficial readings of those emerging from the Wahhābi sect, who ‘*recite the Qur'an but it does not pass beyond their throats; one of you would belittle your own prayer in comparison to theirs, and your fasting compared to theirs; they pass through the Deen like an arrow passes through its target*.’ Notably, ‘*they worship with zeal, impressing people, and they are impressed with themselves*.’⁵ The inevitable outcome of their rejection of contemplation and reason, and their self-admiration and self-righteousness, is that they ‘*kill the people of Islam and leave alone the people of idols*; and “*call to the Book of Allah, yet have no true connection to it*.” For this reason, the caring advisor, upon him and his family be the most perfect blessings and salutations, said: ‘*Wherever you meet*

³ As has been cited in several places including: Ibn Taymiyyah *al-Fatawā' al-Kubra* [Vol. 5, p. 227] and *Majmu' al-Fatawā'* [Vol. 6, p. 135], print editions, amongst other references.

⁴ The phrase is taken from the wording of the *hadīth* reported by Wāthila al-Asqa', recorded in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi.

⁵ As expressed in other areas throughout the book, these are the reported Prophetic lines concerning the sect of the Kharijites.

them, execute them, for there is a reward for whoever executes them on the Day of Judgment.’

Some among them have even issued *Fatawā'* - legal edicts of excommunication against those who claimed that the sun revolves around the earth, asserting instead that the earth is stationary and does not rotate—an egregious and disgraceful error attributed falsely to the Book of Allah – ‘*They call to the Book of Allah, but they are far from it*.’ We seek refuge in Allah from failure, and we ask Him for protection and well-being in this world and the hereafter.

15. Illustrating an example of a specific act of worship

If one were to hold as a belief that the *Jinn* can hide from Allah, evade Him, or escape His grasp - regardless of whether they believe that the *Jinn* as created entities are under the dominion of Allah, without power over death, life, or resurrection; or whether they believe that the *Jinn* have a kinship with Allah - they are, with this specific belief, even though admittedly it is borne of inherent contradiction, attributing to the *Jinn* something of *al-'Ulūhiyyah* (divinity). This is the correct term, or 'equality with Allah,' or 'lordship besides Allah,' or call it as you wish. With this belief, the individual adhering to this is a *mushrik* and a *kāfir*, deserving of entering into hell on the final Day of Resurrection if the message has reached them and the proof has been established against them. Alternatively, the individual could be a *murtad* (apostate) from Islam, if the individual had formerly embraced it correctly. Consequently, his fear of the *Jinn* is considered as being an 'act of worship,' even if it is only a slight fear. The individual may believe that the *Jinn* can be overcome, outmaneuvered or even manipulated by way of magic, talismans or even spell work.

That matter is completely different from the fear which a devout Muslim may have or experience when fleeing from the attack of a lion. Although such fear may be overwhelming, even all consuming, leaving the mind and body consumed by terror. He may flee blindly in panic, fall, or even break his neck. Even so, and by this I swear by Allah, bearing witness by Allah's testimony, challenging anyone on this point – that this overwhelming fear a Muslim could experience, *is by no way* 'worship' of the lion. May Allah forbid that the individual equates the lion with Allah, or even considers the lion as being 'another god' besides Allah. May Allah forbid that he dies as a *mushrik* or

kāfir if he fell into a pit and died therein. Rather, we hope from Allah that the individual's death would be considered as being martyrdom, thereby cleansing and erasing all sin, and raising the rank of the individual of the Day of Judgement.

Moreover, the specific example set out here of 'worshipping the *Jinn*,' should conclusively demonstrate that the definition of *al-Ibādah* – worship, as set out by Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, is utterly invalid. He had described *Ibādah* as being 'the upmost humility with the utmost love.' Despite rejection of the tripartite definition of *Tawheed*, Dr Adnān Ibrāhīm fell into the same trap in broadly accepting Ibn Taymiyyah's definition. Such a definition is utterly nonsense, it is talk devoid of substance.

Its greatest fundamental flaw is the failure to link the matter to belief at source, ensuring it conforms to the book of Allah and the necessities of reason and perception. A middling flaw, is use of the term 'utmost' which has no meaning here. This is because the notion of humility, love, or fear towards someone *believed to possess divinity* is worship, even if it is done in the slightest aspect, as shown by the example of worshipping the *Jinn* in this present chapter. Another point to consider, is that 'love' is not considered as being worship if it is not *preceded by a specific belief*. Even if that belief led one to wander the markets weeping for their beloved, as was the case with the husband of Barirah, may Allah be pleased with them both, during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, for which no rebuke was issued against him. Nor is it worship if it causes one's nerves to collapse, requiring psychological or spiritual treatment, or even leads to insanity, or even worse, sectioning in a mental institution.

To a lesser extent, its other flaws is that it is not comprehensive. Where is fear and hope? Where is reliance and trust? Where are all these other aspects within the definition? Here we need not question *how* this absurd nonsense comes from Ibn Taymiyyah, a man renowned for having a formidable intellect, a matter recognised by friend and foe alike. This is the nature of being overpowered by desire, which blinds one's insight. Additionally, it is not exclusive. The so-called 'god of evil' in Zoroastrianism and dualism is not loved but rather is hated and detested. Yet, he is humbled before, prostrated to, flattered, with sacrifices and offerings made to him, in the attempt to try and *avoid* his evil and harm. All of these matters are

undoubtedly acts of ‘worship,’ by the necessity of reason and perception, as well as agreed upon by the consensus of people across languages.

16. The ominous Tripartite Division

One of our brothers, may Allah reward him, drew our attention to the claim made by the adherents of the Wahhābi sect that Imām Ibn Taymiyyah had been preceded in his formulation of the faulty tripartite division of *Tawheed*. They argue that it was *not* he who invented it, but rather that he merely elaborated and emphasised it excessively. To this, we respond as follows. Firstly, it does not concern us whether he was preceded in this matter or whether he was the one who invented it, for there is no objection to terminology, nor any fault in classification, organisation, innovation, and renewal for the sake of advancing knowledge and understanding. Our objection to Imām Ibn Taymiyyah lies in his egregious errors and his grave injustice toward his opponents.

Secondly, the claim that Imām Ibn Taymiyyah was preceded in this division has no basis in historical reality. Abu Abdallah ‘Ubaydallah ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamdān al-‘Ukbari, known as Ibn Baṭṭa, stated in *al-Ibāna al-Kubra*:

Because Allah, the Exalted, has always been with His Word, His Knowledge, His Power, His Authority, and all His Attributes, as one deity. These attributes are eternal with His eternal being, timeless with His timelessness, everlasting with His everlasting nature, and they remain as long as He remains. Our Lord has never been devoid of these attributes, even for the blink of an eye. However, the *Jahmi* sect sought to negate His attributes in an attempt to negate Him. For the foundation of belief in Allah, which is obligatory upon creation to affirm their faith in Him, is based on three things: the first is that the servant must believe

in His *Aniyya* [أَنِيَّةٌ] (i.e., His essence), thereby distinguishing himself from the creed of the people of *ta'til* (negation), who do not affirm the existence of a Creator. The second is to believe in His *Wahdāniyyah* [وَحْدَانِيَّةٌ] (oneness), thereby distinguishing himself from the creeds of the *mushrikeen*, who acknowledged a Creator but associated others with Him in worship. The third is to believe that He is described by the attributes that it is impossible for anyone except Him to be described with, such as Knowledge, Power, Wisdom, and all the other attributes with which He described Himself in His Book.

This is because we know that many who affirm His existence and His oneness through mere words fall into deviation concerning His attributes. Their deviation concerning His attributes renders their monotheism flawed. Moreover, we find that Allah, the Exalted, has addressed His servants, calling them to affirm each of these three things and to believe in them. As for His call to affirm His existence and His oneness, we will not elaborate on this here due to the length and breadth of the discussion, and because the *Jahmi* sect claims to acknowledge these two, even though their denial of the attributes nullifies their claim to both.¹

To respond, I would argue that the term appears as *Aniyya* (His essence) in the text, but what appears clear to me is that the *original* intended term was *Inniyya* [إِنِيَّةٌ] – His being, meaning that He exists as the Creator and Maker, i.e., the existence of His essence. Publishers, both in print and online seem to have been confused, as were some who cited this text, interpreting it as *Rabbaniyya* [ربانِيَّةٌ] - His lordship. This is if we are to give them the benefit of the doubt and not accuse them of deliberate distortion or fabrication, which many followers of the Wahhābi sect engage in.

Divergent tripartite divisions

One can clearly see from Ibn Baṭṭā's analysis, this indeed is a tripartite division, not of the matter of *Tawheed* per se, but rather of *al-'Iman bil'Allah* [إِيمَانٌ بِاللهِ] - the belief in Allah. Thus being comprised of three-elements or facets:

¹ Ibn Baṭṭā *al-Ibāna al-Kubra* [Vol. 2, pp. 227/228 (print edition - *Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah*, 2005)]

- Belief in His *Inniyya* [إِنِيَّةٌ] meaning the Oneness of His being - i.e., that He exists as the Creator, in contrast to those who deny the existence of a Creator;
- Belief in His *Wahdāniyyah* [وَحْدَانِيَّةٌ] which Ibn Baṭṭā briefly summarises by saying, 'To distinguish thereby from the creeds of the *mushrikeen*, who acknowledged a Creator but associated others with Him in worship.' He does not elaborate further, as he, and indeed all Muslims of his time, including his opponents whom he referred to as the *Jahmiyya*, were not concerned with this topic at all, being more occupied with the debate over the attributes and the intellectual warfare that accompanied it.
- Belief in His attributes, which is the primary focus of his book and the battlefield of contention.

Despite its flaws and the ill-intentioned motives behind its formulation, this division is far more just than that of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, for it does not introduce false meanings to the terms *Uluhiyyah* (divinity) and *Rububiyyah* (lordship), as Imām Ibn Taymiyyah did. Some Wahhābi's have also claimed that Imām Ibn Manda in his book *Kitāb al-Tawheed* had arranged it as follows:

Chapters on *Tawheed Rububiyyah*, such as the beginning of creation, the creation of the Throne, the decree of predestinations, and the creation of the heavens and the earth, and other matters that serve as evidence of *Tawheed Rububiyyah*. Then, he mentioned chapters related to *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, such as supplication, remembrance, and the greatest name of Allah, which is the word 'Allah,' and then he mentioned chapters related to *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Sifāt*.²

However, this in fact is quoted from *Uṣul Masā'il al-'Aqeedah 'Inda al-Salaf wa 'Inda al-Mubtadi'a* which was authored by Professor Saud ibn Abdulaziz al-Khalaf.³ This is from the pure imagination on the part of the Professor. In the organisation of Imām Ibn Manda's book, he merely divided it into chapters without structuring them into separate books or sections. Therefore, it is most

² Abbreviated from the body text, the full title of the book as recorded is *Kitāb al-Tawheed wa Ma'rifat Asmā' Allah 'Azza wa'Jalla wa Sifātihī 'ala al-Ittifāq wal-Tafarrud* (The Book of Monotheism and Knowledge of the Names and Attributes of Allah, the Almighty, in Accordance and Uniqueness).

³ Saud ibn Abdulaziz al-Khalaf *Uṣul Masā'il al-'Aqeedah* [Vol. 1, p. 91]

likely that he did not intend any form of division, neither dual, nor tripartite nor any other. Rather, he arranged the chapters according to the history of the world and the sequence of creation, according to his own perspective, and Allah knows best.

The group associated with the Wahhābi sect also claimed that Imām Qādī al-Quḍā' Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrāhim ibn Ḥabīb al-Anṣārī al-Kūfī, a compatriot of Abu Ḥanīfah, may Allah be pleased with them both, had made an allusion to the purported tripartite division in his book, narrated by way of Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abul-Qāsim ibn Ismā'il al-Taymī al-Āṣbāhānī, in his book entitled *al-Hujjah fi Bayān al-Mahajja wa Sharḥ al-Tawheed wa Madhhab Ahl al-Sunnah*. The claim being he placed it in a separate section due to its importance, entitled '*Chapter on the Prohibition of Seeking the Modality of Allah's Attributes*':

Abu 'Amr 'Abd al-Wahhāb reported to us - my father reported to us Muḥammad ibn Ja'far al-Sarkhasi reported to us, saying: Muḥammad ibn Salama al-Balkhi reported to us Bishr ibn Waleed al-Qādī from Abu Yusuf al-Qādī that he said: *Tawheed* is not to be established through *qiyās* (analogy). Have you not heard Allah, the Exalted, in the verses where He describes Himself as the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the Strong, the Sovereign? And He did not say, 'I am All-Powerful because of such and such a cause,' or 'I am All-Knowing because of such and such a reason,' or 'I am the Sovereign due to such and such a meaning.' Therefore, *qiyās* is not permissible in matters of *Tawheed*. Allah is only known by His names and is only described by His attributes. Allah the Exalted has said in His Book: '*O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous,*' [2: 21]. And He said: '*Do they not look into the dominion of the heavens and the earth and everything that Allah has created?*' [7: 185]. And He said: '*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that sail in the sea...*' [2: 164], until where He said 'for a people who reason.'

Abu Yusuf said: 'Allah did not say, 'Look how I am the All-Knowing, how I am the All-Powerful, how I am the Creator.' Rather, He said: 'Look at how I have created.' Then He said: '*He created you, then causes you to die,*' [30: 40]; and He said 'And in yourselves, do

you not see?' [51: 21]. Meaning: Learn that these things have a Lord who turns them over and begins them, and He is their Creator, just as He is yours. Allah has guided His creation by means of His creation so that they may know they have a Lord to worship, obey, and unify (in *Tawheed*), and so that they may know that He is their Creator and not they themselves. Then He named Himself, saying: 'I am the Merciful, I am the Compassionate, I am the Creator, I am the All-Powerful, I am the Sovereign.' This Being who created you is called the Sovereign, the All-Powerful, Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. These are His names by which He is described.'

Abu Yusuf said: 'Allah is known by His signs and by His creation, and He is described by His attributes and called by His names as He has described Himself in His Book, and by what His Messenger conveyed to creation.' Abu Yusuf said: 'Indeed, Allah, the Exalted, created you and endowed you with faculties and limbs, and some of your limbs are unable to perform the functions of others. He transitions you from one state to another so that you may know that you have a Lord who created you. Your very self is a proof against you, demonstrating knowledge of Him through His creation. Then He described Himself, saying: 'I am the Lord, I am the Merciful, I am Allah, I am the All-Powerful, I am the Sovereign.' Thus, He is described by His attributes and called by His names. Allah said: '*Call upon Allah or call upon the Merciful. Whichever [name] you call—to Him belong the best names,*' [17: 110]; and He said: '*To Allah belong the best names, so call upon Him by them and leave those who deviate concerning His names,*' [7: 180], and He said: '*His are the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth exalts Him, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise,*' [59: 24].

Then Abu Yusuf continued: 'Allah has commanded us to unify Him (in *Tawheed*), and *Tawheed* is not established through *qiyās* because *qiyās* involves comparison to something similar, and Allah has no similarity and no equal: '*Blessed is Allah, the best of creators,*' [23: 14]. How can *Tawheed* be comprehended through *qiyās* when He is the Creator, unlike the creation? '*There is nothing like unto Him,*' [42: 11]. Allah has commanded you to believe in everything His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has brought, as He said: '*Say, O mankind, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, to Him belongs the*

dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no deity except Him. He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided,’ [7: 158]. Allah has commanded you to be a follower, listening and obedient. Had the matter of *Tawheed* been left open for the ummah to seek through their own reasoning, analogy, and personal whims, they would have gone astray. Have you not heard the words of Allah: ‘But if the truth had followed their desires, the heavens and the earth and whoever is in them would have been corrupted,’ [23: 71]. Understand what has been explained to you.

Imām Ibn Manda included this in his book *al-Tawheed*: ‘Muhammad ibn Abi Ja‘far al-Sarkhasi reported to us the complete *isnād* and *matn*.’ I would argue that Muhammad ibn Salama al-Balkhi was a well-known Ḥanafi jurist, and I do not believe there is any issue with him. Bishr ibn al-Waleed al-Kindi is *thiqa* (trustworthy) and virtuous, no fault has been found in him. In light of the above, and as the text in full has been quoted, peruse this careful. Read it many times, even read it in reverse and do inform us where exactly is mention of the division of Ibn Taymiyyah.

Desperation

Furthermore, the followers of the lying, deviant Wahhābi sect have falsely claimed that al-Ṭabāri, and even the distinguished scholar, the illustrious Companion Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with both of them, preceded them in this erroneous tripartite division or in some of their details. To this, we respond - may Allah protect them from such an accusation. Even if these corrupt divisions, or some of their false details, had come from the eminent scholar Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, or from anyone else beneath him, we would have cast them aside. No one, after the Book of Allah or besides the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, holds authority. We have already refuted the interpretation of Abdullah ibn Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, regarding the term ‘*al-Muhaymin*,’ which he explained as ‘*the Witness and Trusted*,’ whereas in truth, it means ‘*the Ruler, the Dominant, the Controller*.’

Some members of the group, particularly the more skilled followers of the Wahhābi sect, have claimed that the aforementioned tripartite division is based upon a comprehensive induction of the texts of the Qur’ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*. Since some of these figures, such as Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd, may Allah have mercy on him, were known for their honesty and precision, it is likely that they were misled by Ibn Taymiyyah’s citation of dozens, or perhaps hundreds of verses, along with several *ahādīth*, when discussing *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, and *Tawheed al-Asmā’ wa ’l-Ṣifāt*. This is particularly evident in his insistence, marked by a strange persistence and obstinacy, that – ‘The *mushrikeen* of Arabia had no *Shirk* in their belief in *al-Rububiyyah*.’ It appears that Ibn Taymiyyah himself was convinced of the correctness of his statement and believed that he had thoroughly examined and comprehended the evidence.

To this, we respond: sufficient for you is an enlightened and critical reading of the verses of the Holy Qur’ān, which we have previously mentioned. Coupled with that, one should also peruse the previous chapters of this work as they relate to the historic reality of *Shirk* in Arabia. What he missed from the verses of the Holy Qur’ān far exceeds what he cited, as did his omission of the majority of Prophetic *ahādīth* and historical reports. Second, even in the limited number of verses he did cite he did not present most of the verses in their full context but rather severed them from their proper context. This is the action described in the verse:

المُفَرِّقُونَ، الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِصْبَيْنَ

Like those who divide themselves into bands and abuse the Qur’ān.⁴

This is highly reprehensible. He interpreted certain Qur’ānic terms based on his own language and the terminology of later scholars, whereas the Qur’ān was not revealed in your language, nor mine, nor in the language of later generations. It was revealed ‘*In a clear Arabic tongue*.’⁵ This is akin to the actions of those who ‘*distort words from their places*,’ which again is also highly objectionable.⁶

⁴ Qur’ān 15: 90/91

⁵ Qur’ān 26: 195

⁶ Qur’ān 4: 46

Compounding all of this, he *imagined* meanings in the revealed texts that were not there, allowing his limited perceptions and extravagant imaginations to take precedence as the guiding principle, while relegating the revealed texts to a subordinate role. This is in direct opposition to the command of Allah:

الْمَصْ، كِتَابٌ أُنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنْذِرَ بِهِ وَذَنْبُرِي لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، اتَّبِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ
الِّيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ، وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أُولِيَّاءَ قَبْلَيَا مَا تَنْذَكِرُونَ

Alif Lam Mim Sad. This is a Book which has been sent down to you, so let there be no distress in your heart because of it, that you may warn thereby, and a reminder to the believers.

*Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and do not follow other protectors besides Him; little do you remember.*⁷

As a result, he committed serious errors in understanding these texts, and these errors became severe and glaring due to his neglect of Prophetic *ahādīth*, historical reports, and the lack of careful examination and critical analysis of the interpretative reports of the early scholars – the *Salaf*. However, the followers of the Wahhābi sect are skilled in the art of intellectual intimidation, defending their unsound assertions when they lack evidence and proof, by falsely attributing them to the *Salaf*. Yet Allah has absolved the *Salaf* of their false claims. To them, we say - your oft-repeated, tiresome phrases such as, ‘This is the doctrine of the *Salaf*,’ or ‘This is what the *Salaf* upheld,’ and the worst of them, ‘The *ijmā*’ of the *Salaf*,’ are nothing more than clichés – *Shinshina*, we recognise from old rhetoric and no longer deceive even the uneducated among the common Muslims.⁸ We say to them, as Allah, Glorified be His Names, said to their forerunners among the misguided and extreme Christians:

لَا تَقْعُدُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ

*Do not go to excess in your Deen and do not speak about Allah except the truth.*⁹

⁷ *Qur'ān* 7: 1/3

⁸ By way of an additional comment here, the expression originally used [شَيْشِنَةً نَعْرَفُهَا مِنْ أَخْرَمْ] is an idiomatic Arabic phrase, meaning ‘a habit we recognise from old’ or ‘a trait we know well from someone.’ Often it is used to refer to an old pattern of behaviour that is familiar and predictable. We are all too familiar with these baseless repetitive assertions made by this sect – and for far too long.

⁹ *Qur'ān* 4: 171

انْتَهُوا حَيْرًا لَّكُمْ

*Stop [this], that is better for you.*¹⁰

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

17. A highly misleading *Fatwa* from the Saudi Church Council

In light of all that has been marshalled to date, there is no place whatsoever for the so-called *fatwa* (legal responsa) made by the Council of Senior Scholars in what is called ‘Saudi Arabia.’ This *fatwa* of the Church Council was originally published in the magazine entitled *al-Hadi al-Nabawi*. The individual posing the question, was none other than ‘Dr Suhaib Hasan,’ and it reads as follows:

(Question)

Some people, from the callers, have begun giving importance to mentioning *Tawheed al-Hakimiyyah* in addition to the three well-known categories of *Tawheed*. So does this fourth category enter within the three categories? Or is it not included, so we make it a separate category that we must give (extra) importance to? And it is said that Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab gave attention to *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* in his time when he saw that the people fell short of *Tawheed* in that aspect, and that Imām Ahmad in his time gave attention to *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt* when he saw the people falling short of *Tawheed* in that aspect. But as for today then the people fall short with regard to *Tawheed al-Hakimiyyah*, so therefore we must give attention to it. So how correct is this saying?

(Answer)

Tawheed is of three categories: *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*, and there is no fourth category. And judging by what Allah sent down comes under *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* since it is from the types of worship due to Allah, the One

free of all imperfections, and all of the types of worship fall under *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*. Hence making *al-Hakimiyyah* a separate category is an innovated act, which has not been the saying of any of the scholars as far as we know. However there were some of them who generalised and said that *Tawheed* is of two classes: *Tawheed* in relation to *al-Ma'rifa wal'Ithbāt* (known and affirmed) - and it is *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa'l-Šifāt*; and *Tawheed* in relation to *al-Ṭalab wal'Qasād* - and it is *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*. Then there are others who particularise and place *Tawheed* in three categories, as has preceded, and Allah knows best. So it is obligatory to give attention to all of *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, and to begin by forbidding *Shirk*, since it is the greatest of sins and annuls all of the deeds, and a person upon it will remain forever in the fire. Also all of the Prophets began with the command to worship Allah alone and the forbiddance of *Shirk*. And Allah has commanded us to follow their way and to proceed upon their methodology in *da'wah* and the rest of the affairs of the *Deen*.

So giving attention to *Tawheed with its three categories is obligatory in every time*, since *Shirk* and *Ta'eeel* of the Names and Attributes (of Allah) are still found,¹ indeed they occur very often and their danger increases towards the end of time, and the seriousness of these two is a matter hidden from many of the Muslims, and those who call to these two are many and active. The occurrence of *Shirk* is not something restricted to the time of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab, nor is *Ta'eeel* of the names and attributes restricted to the time of Imām Ahmad, may Allah have mercy upon him, as occurs in the question posed.

Rather their danger has increased and their prevalence has grown in Muslim societies today. So they are in the greatest need of those who will forbid from falling into them and who will make clear their danger. Whilst knowing that being upright upon the commands of Allah and avoidance of what He forbids and applying by His *Shari'ah*, all of that falls under realisation of *Tawheed* and remaining free from *Shirk*. And

¹ As a term, normally this refers to historical groups who have for all intents and purposes been seen as nullifying the reality of the Divine Attributes.

may Allah extol and send peace upon our Prophet Muḥammad and his true followers and his Companions.²

Aside from the formatting, this is the text as produced, from the supposed senior council of ‘scholars’ no less. One may legitimately query where is the actual knowledge underpinning any of the text. Indeed, an entire thesis could be written to disentangle the multiplicity of errors contained therein. Notwithstanding that, six points can be outlined in response.

Analysis

Firstly, there is very clear misrepresentation and obfuscation, if not deliberate misguidance, in describing the alternative categorisation as an innovated act – as highlighted in the text. Here this presents to the simple-minded reader (or indeed listener) that the matter is a *bid'ah* in the legal sense. Categorically this is not the case, as all the mentioned categorisations, including the one proposed in this book, are indeed invented and newly formulated in any case. They are terminologies, and there is no harm in using them, provided they are precise and accurately reflect reality. Otherwise, they become useless, of little benefit, or even harmful. Our concerns here are not baseless accusations or a matter of mere ‘whisperings’ of doubt but are grounded in reality. That much is evident from the statements of Ibn Uthaymeen, who was a member of this very ‘Council of Senior Scholars,’ who explicitly declared that it is an invented, innovated, and objectionable claim, branding it as a *bid'ah* and a deviation, as will be outlined in the next chapter.

Second, notice the absolute insistence on the tripartite division, even though it contains clear intrinsic flaws. Coupled with that, is its use as a pretext by the scholars, nay sycophants, of the ruling political elites to absolve them of all responsibility related to ruling. It seeks to provide a pathway for them to be absolved from the mire and stigma related to *Shirk* and *kufr* within this area, even being utilised as a mechanism to avoid them being even held to account. Such people claim that they are the people of reasoning, with a unique insight, yet they excel only in exaggeration and empty baseless rhetoric

² Emphasis and highlighting added. Originally published in *al-Hadi al-Nabawi*, [Issue 7, pp. 25/26]. English renditions of the text appear online and usually include a sign-off from ‘The Permanent Committee For Research and Verdicts,’ with the signatories including Ṣalih al-Fawzan, Abdul Aziz Al al-Shaykh and Ibn Bāz.

about ‘blocking the means, choosing ‘the lesser of two evils,’ forgoing the lesser of two benefits, and similar such absurdities. One need ask where has all of that gone?

Further to the above, the passing reference in the answer to ‘ruling by other than what Allah has revealed’ is not an appropriate response to the question which was posed, because it was not about that specifically; in any event, that is a matter falling within the domain of human action. Rather, it was about the concept of *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah* which is one of Allah’s attributes and actions. Clearly this alone should suffice to demonstrate the profound ignorance which was sprouted by this insidious council.

Even the reference which is made in the purported ‘judgement’ by ruling by other than what Allah has revealed, is done so incidentally. Its mention contains no analysis nor detailed explanation. While it neither nourishes nor does it satisfy, it does leave the gates wide open to matters of destructive *kufr*; arguably one of the greatest aspects of *Shirk* that leads to damnation in the fires of hell. That is manifested by the alternation, in some cases abolition of the laws and rules enshrined in the revelation. And again, such individuals still have the audacity to claim they are the people of ‘reasoning and analogy;’ seeking to ‘block harmful means,’ and to try and ensure ‘maximum benefit and averting harms.’ Is there not a greater harm that relegating the *Shari'ah* of Allah?

In terms of wording and scope, the response shows a complete ignorance of the reality of people today and what takes place in their gatherings in terms of discussions and debates. Finding individuals in the world who are studiously looking into the intricate details underpinning *al-Asmā' wa'l-Sifāt* would be a rarity. Except that is, for the deranged followers still adhering to the sect of Wahhabism. They attribute ‘*Salafism*’ only to themselves, that they alone are the true followers of the righteous *Salaf*. Their imitators, like Dr Suhaib Hasan are no different. All of these groups are alike, be they from Saudi ‘Council of Senior scholars,’ to the group who are *Madkhali*, all the way to *Hizb al-Nur* in Egypt. Concerning topics which are actually of concern and pressing for people, they revolve around the nature of legislation and governance; the topic of rights, including those of women and the betrayal of the supposed ‘Muslim rulers’ by way of their alliances, either with the elites in America or even now openly with Zionism.

Regarding the ‘whispers’ promoted regarding whether the Qur’ān is created, what Bishr al-Murisi and others said, or even discussions pertaining to whether the Prophet is concerned ‘light,’ in reality or metaphorically, these are extremely narrow topics discussed by fanatics who claim to be ‘Salafi,’ or those adherents of Sufism, among them the Ahbāsh, as well as others who resemble them. Contained within this category are the murderous groups, be that the GIA of Algeria previously to ISIS / *Da’esh* and ‘Boko Haram’ today. There are many other extremists of this ilk, the enemies of Allah, His Messenger, the noble Companions and the believers in general. Such individuals and groups live in the darkness of long-dead debates or in other imaginary worlds that have no connection or relevance to the reality of the contemporary world and the lives of people today.

In actuality, there is an appalling level of ignorance found about the precise mission that the Prophets undertook. The ‘Council of Senior Scholars’ seek to belittle that Prophetic message by conveying the view that the call to worship Allah alone, without partners, solely relates to calling people to a set of specific rituals, be that prostration, bowing, sacrifices or the like. They would have us all believe in such superficiality. Yet it is a blatant lie which is levelled against the noble and honoured Prophetic line. To refute this, one only needs to consider the mission of the Prophet Luṭ - Lot peace be upon him. Where in his mission do we even find mention of specific ritual acts like bowing or prostration? His primary call was to abandon the indulgence in immoralities and abominations, and there was never any reference to *Asnām* (idols), or even deities worshipped besides Allah, nor any calls for seeking their help or refuge.

No wonder the abysmal understanding from the so called ‘Council of Senior Scholars.’ In truth, it is a trivial, ridiculous understanding, bereft of real knowledge, reflective of a backward dull intellect. Yet it also raises some serious doubts about the very nature of the ‘Council’ itself and its members. They are nothing more than sycophants in the service of a corrupt and tyrannical regime; issuing decrees to curry favour with whatever corrupt member of the ‘royal family’ holds power. That so called ‘blessed state’ as it was once described by Ibn Bāz, is in fact a monstrosity. Its record in allying with the enemies of Islam, be that to destroy Iraq, or hand over Palestine to the Zionists, is well known. Not to mention its membership of international organisations which have a track record of killing, humiliating and occupying

the lands of Islam. Internally, Islamic laws are replaced by rules and regulations which are abhorrent, from the racist ‘Saudi citizenship and residency’ to having usury in the banking system. Coupled with this, the Saudi state has consistently waged a relentless war against any sincere and enlightened calls for a return to the *Deen* of Islam. Following in the footsteps of their Western masters, legitimate opposition is labelled as ‘terrorism,’ innovation and extremism. One can expend much ink in listing the crimes of the Saudi state, so much so it would turn the hair of the youth white from horror. All the while, the ‘Council of Senior Scholars’ justifies this status quo. Enjoining the evil and seeking to forbid the good. May Allah lift the cloud of darkness that has hung for too long over the Arabian Peninsula and all Muslim lands.

18. Another heinous *Fatwa* - from al-Uthaymeen

If the aforementioned *Fatwa* (*legal respona*) from the (Church) ‘Council of Senior Scholars’ lacked any substantial evidence of knowledge, then the following by a member of the very same Council, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ṣalīḥ al-Uthaymeen, can only be described as outright shameful and scandalous. Quite a famous, or rather infamous answer, this was originally outlined in a weekly ‘open door’ meeting, recorded on cassette tape – a common recording mechanism prior to the age of digitalisation and the Internet. One individual in attendance posed the question, ‘What do you say, may Allah forgive you, about someone who has added a fourth category to *Tawheed*, naming it *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah*?’ Outlined below, verbatim, is the ‘ingenious’ answer which al-Uthaymeen gave:

We say, that he is *ḍāl* (misguided) and he is *jāhil* (an ignoramus). (This is) because *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah* is the *Tawheed* of Allah, the Exalted and Sublime. Allah, the Exalted and Sublime is *al-Hākim*. If you state that there are three sub-divisions of *Tawheed* (*sic.* tripartite definition) as has been said by the *ulemā*, *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah* is contained with *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, because *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* is the *Tawheed* of *al-Hukm*, *al-Khalq* and *al-Tadbeer* of Allah the Exalted and Sublime. And this viewpoint is reprehensible. How (can there be) *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah*? It is not possible to unify *al-Hākimiyah*. Does it mean that the entire world should have a single *Hākim* (ruler) or what? Thus this viewpoint is reprehensible, a matter of innovation; a condemned notion to be rejected. It is to be said to the one advocating it, if you were to mean that *al-Hukm* is the preserve of

Allah, then that falls inside of *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*. (That is) because *al-Rabb* (the Lord) is *al-Khāliq* (the Creator); *al-Mālik* (the Possessor) and the Administrator of affairs. Thus this (viewpoint) is *bid’ah* (innovation) and *dalālah* (misguidance).¹

Have you ever seen such a line of argument based upon such absurdities? That isn’t limited to the clumsiness of style or weakness of language, which could be expected from an impromptu question and answer session such as that. Nor for that matter is al-Uthaymeen known for a lack of precision or clarity in argument. On the contrary, read his *Fatāwa* as they relate to topics of *fiqh* regarding menstrual bleeding, post-natal bleeding and the like. On those topics, he can be precise. At its core, the answer he gives stems from sycophancy before the ruler. A slavish servitude to the tyrants who rule by other than what Allah has revealed.

Moreover, there is a clear mixture of terms revealing that al-Uthaymeen doesn’t clearly understand the distinction between *al-Rabb* – the Lord, Master, the Owner, and other terms like *al-Khāliq*, the Creator. How can people place any trust in leadership to a man like this or his ilk? How can any revere his opinions, some even to the point of hallowed veneration? Isn’t the Islamic ruling that Muslims should be one united *Ummah* – not split into fifty plus statelets, many of which slaves in the global empire of the United States? Shouldn’t the Muslim *Ummah* have political unity – with a unified adoption on war and peace; a single ruler who is the Caliph of Islam? Isn’t the ideal political type, as required by Islamic law, mandated to spread the message of Islam to all of humanity? To live under its message, experience its justice. Why is it considered so strange to the priestly class of Arabia, or any other land, to not want to see this earth living under the commands of Allah via the political system He has given us? A system which dispenses justice to all. Ibn Uthaymeen surely knows this in his heart with certainty and cannot be totally unaware of it; so why the need to mock and then try and ridicule? Didn’t Ibn Uthaymeen fear that the angels would rebuke him when his death approached – as we read in the blessed verse:

¹ There are quite a large number of references on the Internet regarding this, both pro and in opposition to what al-Uthaymeen said. For example see the following which includes audio: <<https://alathar.net/home/esound/index.php?op=codevi&coid=64518>> accessed 3 Nov-2024.

أَبِّالهُ وَأَيَّاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ شَتَّهُنُونَ، لَا تَخْتَرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ

‘We were just chatting, just amusing ourselves.’ Say, ‘Were you making jokes about Allah, His Revelations, and His Messenger? Do not try to justify yourselves; you have gone from belief to disbelief.’²

From this, it should be manifestly clear by now that there is great confusion, contradiction and flawed reasoning that has underpinned the tripartite definition of *Tawheed* that has become so common place. Adherents to the tripartite definition as showed above by Ibn Uthaymeen, cannot place the very notion of *al-Hākimiyah* into any reasonable construct. Nor do they dare deny it outright, as the ‘educated’ among them surely know that would lead them to stray into open and clear *kufr*. The ‘Council of Senior Scholars’ in what is called ‘Saudi Arabia’ claims that *al-Hākimiyah* is a branch of what they call *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*, stating explicitly: ‘Ruling by what Allah has revealed falls under *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*.’ However as shown, al-Uthaymeen, had a somewhat better stance, stating explicitly, *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah* falls under rubric of *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*. Reflect also on the vast difference between these mixed-up statements by Ibn Uthaymeen and the empty talk and ramblings of the ‘Council of Senior Scholars.’ Note the words from the eminent Imām Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: ‘Many others seek a judge other than Him, seeking his judgment, arguing for him and being pleased with his judgment. These three, then, are the pillars of *Tawheed*: that one takes no Lord other than Him, nor object of worship, nor Judge.’³ Here, one should note well where he made *al-Hākimiyah* – taking Allah alone as the ultimate sole judge, not being content with any other – as being a pillar of *Tawheed*. This is despite the fact that Ibn al-Qayyim made the serious error of following Ibn Taymiyyah’s incorrect definitions related to *al-Rububiyyah* and *al-Uluhiyyah*.

The Prophetic reminder

Indeed, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, spoke the truth to highlight such matters. He clearly explained that

² *Qur’ān* 9: 65/66

³ Ibn Qayyim (2020) *Ranks of the Divine Seekers - Madārij al-Sālikeen*, translated by Ovamir Anjum, (Brill: Leiden), [Vol. 2, p. 542].

knowledge isn’t withdrawn from the people by Allah, but rather it is taken away with the death of the *Ulemā*:

حَدَثَنِي يَحْيَى بْنُ هَشَمَ أَمَلَهُ عَلَيْنَا حَدِيثَ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرُو مَنْ فِيهِ إِلَى فِي يَقُولُ
سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ إِنْتَرَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ النَّاسِ،
وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَتَرَكْ عَالَمٌ، اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُؤْسَاءً جَهَالًا، فَسُلُّوا،
فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَصْنَلُوا

Yahya narrated to me from Hishām who dictated it to us, my father narrated to me that he heard directly from Abdullah ibn ‘Amr, saying – I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying: *Allah does not take away the knowledge by removing it from the people. Rather, He takes it away by the death of the Ulemā until when no Aālim remains people will take the ignorant as leaders. They will be asked, giving rulings without ‘Ilm, leading themselves and others astray.*⁴

Arguably this is one of the most authentic channels of transmission in the world. It is *hadīth musalsal*, a continuous connected channel of reporting coupled with explicit mention of hearing and dictation, as it has been recorded in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad. He also records it with similar wording by way of other *Ṣaḥīḥ* lines of reporting. Other Imām’s have followed suite, like al-Bukhāri and Muslim, the latter covering a wide array of its varying channels of reporting. Compilers of other collections, like the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi, al-Dārimi and Ibn Mājah record it too with authentic channels to name but a few. Narrated independently from an alternate pathway by al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* we have the following too:

حَدَثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ تَلِيدٍ حَدَثَنِي أَبْنُ وَهْبٍ حَدَثَنِي عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ شَرِيعٍ وَغَيْرُهُ عَنْ أَبِي الْأَسْوَدِ عَنْ
عِرْوَةَ قَالَ حَجَّ عَلَيْنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمْرُو فَسَمِعْتَهُ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ
فَسَاقَهُ بَنْوَهُ، فَحَدَثَتْ بِهِ عَائِشَةُ زَوْجُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عَمْرُو حَجَّ
بَعْدَ، فَقَالَتْ يَا ابْنَ أَخْتِي، انْطَلَقْ إِلَى عَبْدِ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَشْبَثَتْ لِي مِنْهُ الَّذِي حَدَثَنِي عَنْهُ، فَجَنَّتْهُ فَسَأَلَتْهُ
فَحَدَثَنِي بِهِ كَحْوَةِ حَدِيثِي، فَأَنْتِي عَائِشَةُ فَأَخْبَرْتَهَا فَعَجَبَتْ فَقَالَتْ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ حَفَظَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ
عَمْرُو!

Sa’eed ibn Taleed narrated to us Ibn Wahb narrated to me ‘Abdar-Rahman ibn Shureeh’ narrated to me, and other than him, from

⁴ *Musnad* Ahmad [Vol. 2, no. 6511]

Abul'Aswad from 'Urwa, he said: I heard the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, saying it, and then he (the narrator) conveyed it in the same manner. I narrated it to 'Aisha, wife of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. Thereafter Abdullah ibn 'Amr undertook the *Hajj*, so she said – 'O son of my sister! Go to Abdullah and confirm on my behalf what you narrated to me from him.' Thus I went to him and asked him concerning it. He narrated it to me in the same way as he had told me before. I then went to 'Aisha and narrated to her, and she was amazed, saying, 'By Allah, Abdullah ibn 'Amr has indeed preserved it well!'⁵

Imām Muslim has recorded similarly in his *Sahīh*, with some additions. No more time than is necessary need be placed upon discussing the nonsense which stems from the 'senior Church council of Saudi Arabia.' Be they ignorant, foolish, or open agents, conclusions remain the same. The trustworthy and divinely protected advisor, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him provides clarity unlike the obfuscation from the likes of Ibn Uthaymeen. Life within the temporal domain is far too short and precious. We need all turn away from the corruption and befogged minds.

Going back to the main subject relating to a more accurate depiction of the categories or divisions of *Tawheed* is a far more important and worthwhile endeavour. Beneficial knowledge is gained from this subject. Righteous actions that reform souls, hearts, and conditions in this world subsequently follow. In turn, that brings us all closer to the presence of the Knower of all secrets. In this way, we attain eternal happiness and salvation from the everlasting damnation of the fire, by the guidance, mercy and generosity of Allah. There is no 'other god' besides Him and in Him we trust and seek Help, *ameen*.

⁵ *Sahīh* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 6, no. 6877]

Part VII

The Abrahamic Tradition

1. Preamble - Who are the Sabians?

Identifying who exactly are the Sabians (sometimes spelled ‘Sabaeans’) has been a matter that has perplexed, on occasion, confused, many Islamic scholars.¹ An extensive summary of the background and varying differences over the nature as well as identity of this group has been outlined by Muhammad Ibrāhim al-Fayoumi in *The History of Pre-Islamic Religious Thought*.² Yet this analytical outline can be quite turgid and dense to peruse, particularly given the divisions or sub-categories of *al-Ṣābi’ah* (the Sabians). Moreover, since they were first encountered many scholars and theologians tried to untangle their precise beliefs, whether they were originally stemming from ‘*al-Ṣābi’ah al-Hunafā’*’ - those who left the Arab *Hanifah* tradition and embraced the teachings of the Sabaeans, or whether they were an amalgam of various pre-Islamic traditions covering the ancient Near East up to the advent

¹ Originally this chapter appears in Volume 2 [Part V] of the *Tawḥīd* series. We have opted to include the chapter here given its subject matter is more in line with areas covered in this present volume.

² Muhammad Ibrāhim al-Fayoumi (1994), *The History of Pre-Islamic Religious Thought*, (4th edition). The original Arabic edition provides for a large array of block-quotes from this work [pp. 273, 276/281]. For the English translation this has been omitted. One of the summary excerpts mentioned covers the background discussion to the group identity, namely, ‘As for Islam, it categorically applied the term to a group which held specific beliefs. They had erred in attributing a form of divinity, thereby placing an intermediary between themselves and Allah, as they considered the celestial bodies to possess ‘a divine radiance,’ in their understanding. Some of them worshiped the angels for their ‘spiritual significance,’ and that was their own discernment or as ‘guidance’ from some of their wise men or sages. Abu Ḥanifah says: ‘They are not ‘*Abdatul-Awthān*’, but they venerate the stars just as the *Ka’ba* is venerated.’ And it was said: ‘They are a monotheistic people who believe that they are influenced by the stars and acknowledge some of the Prophets, such as Yahya.’

of Islam. Writing in his acclaimed *Tafsir, Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb*, Imām al-Rāzi says:

Thirdly, and it is closer (to explaining) who they are, is that they are a people who worship the planets. Thereafter, there are two viewpoints (regarding this). Firstly, that the creator of existence is Allah, may He be Glorified, except that He ordered reverence for the planets; designating them a direction of prayer, supplication and veneration. The second viewpoint, that Allah, may He be Glorified created the heavens and the planets, the latter being responsible for management of worldly affairs, which includes (matters of) good, evil, health and sickness. And He is the creator of it. Therefore, mankind has the necessity to show reverence to them because they are the entities governing the temporal plain. However, they also worship Allah, may He be Glorified. This belief is attributed to the Chaldeans, to whom the Prophet Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, came to, rejecting and refuting their belief.³

Yet most of the viewpoints that have been mentioned by the people of Islam, especially al-Sayf al-‘Amidi, appear to be viewpoints of theologians and philosophers from the people of Ḥarrān, Ray and Gondishapur. Indeed, Muslim scholars acquired a great deal of knowledge from these regions regarding the ancient history of Iraq, but also other branches of knowledge, including logic, philosophy and medicine. It would seem that these are later philosophical views which emerged after a review, analysis and overview of such ancient beliefs. They don't necessarily represent the views of the wider ancient peoples of Iraq, such as that of the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians.⁴ Secondly, in spite of all these numerous but often contradictory accounts, it is very difficult to arrive at a definitive viewpoint regarding the

³ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 3, p. 536]

⁴ Pinning down the exact set of beliefs held by the various groups who came to adopt the name ‘Ṣābiān’ in Ḥarrān, is a matter that has perplexed and intrigued scholars and not just from within the Islamic tradition. Numerous pagan cults were worshipped in Ḥarrān, including those from adjacent Babylon, reflecting star and planetary worship. Greek learning too, including that of the astronomy of Ptolemy, as well as the works of Plato and other Platonic schools, infused this dynamic. For a lucid short overview of the topic in English, see: David Pingree, (2002) ‘The Ṣābiāns of Ḥarrān and the Classical Tradition,’ *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, [Vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 8/35].

al-Ṣābi’ah – the Sabians, whom are mentioned by Allah the Mighty and Sublime in three-different sets of Qur’ānic verses as set out below:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ هُمْ عَنْ رِبِّهِمْ وَلَا خُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

*The believers, the Jews, the Christians, and the Sabians, all those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good - will have their rewards with their Lord. No fear for them, nor will they grieve.*⁵

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خُوفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

*For the believers, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians, those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good deeds, there is no fear: they will not grieve.*⁶

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمُجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

*As for the believers, those who follow the Jewish faith, the Sabians, the Christians, the Magians, and the idolaters, Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection; Allah witnesses all things.*⁷

What is noteworthy is the opinion of Imām Abu Ḥanifah regarding the lawfulness, in his view, of marrying their women, since they were not idol worshippers but held reverence for the celestial bodies, akin to how the

⁵ *Qur’ān*, 2: 62

⁶ *Qur’ān*, 5: 69

⁷ *Qur’ān*, 22: 17

Muslims revere the *Ka'ba*.⁸ This is despite the various practices and rituals that some might have mistakenly perceived as being ‘acts of worship,’ a particular the obsession of the adherents from the sect of Wahhābism. Admittedly, his two prominent students, Abu Yusuf and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, dissented from his viewpoint, because in their assessment, they perceived that the Sabian reverence was based upon a belief in the *divinity* of the celestial bodies or planets, that it was not merely ritual actions. Hence, they argued they were properly *mushrikeen*. Both students conformed with Abu Ḥanifah in viewing the Sabians as being *Ahl-ul-Kawākib* – people of the planets.⁹

⁸ Cited in the Arabic edition is the following long quotation from *Tafsir al-‘Alusi, Ruh al-Ma’āni* [Vol. 1, p. 279] which in part reads: ‘And the Sabians are the people whose doctrine is based on fanaticism towards the spiritual and taking intermediaries. And since they cannot reach such spiritual entities with their essence and receive from them in their true form, a group of them resorted (to the making of) temples. The first faction are the worshippers of celestial bodies, while the second are those who worship *Asnām*. And each of these two groups has various (sub)groups, differing in beliefs and worship. Imām Abu Ḥanifah, may Allah the Almighty be pleased with him says: ‘They are not ‘*Abdatul-Awthān*’ (idol-worshippers), but rather they glorify the stars as the *Ka'ba* is glorified,’ and it was said: ‘They are a monotheistic people who believe in the influence of the stars and acknowledge some of the Prophets, such as Yahya, peace be upon him.’ And it was said: ‘They acknowledge Allah Almighty, and read the *Zabur* (Psalms), worship the angels, and pray to the *Ka'ba*.’

⁹ Uthmān ibn Ali al-Zayla’i al-Ḥanafi, *Tabayun-Ḥaqā’iq Sharḥ Kanz al-Daqā’iq* [Vol. 2, p. 110]; d. 743 AH. An extensive quote is provided in the Arabic edition detailing the difference of opinion held by the Ḥanafi jurists on the matter. ‘He, may Allah have mercy upon him said: *al-Ṣābi’ah* (the Sabians); it is permissible to marry her. Abu Yusuf and Muḥammad (both) said: It is *not* permissible to marry them. This difference of opinion is based upon whether they are considered to be ‘*Abdatul-Awthān*’ (idol-worshippers) or not. According to them, they are ‘*Abdatul-Awthān*,’ since they worship the stars. According to Abu Ḥanifah, they are *not* ‘*Abdatul-Awthān*’, but they venerate the stars akin to how a Muslim venerates the *Ka'ba*. If that is the case, then it is permissible (to marry them) by *Ijmā’* (consensus). (This is) because they are considered to be from among the *Ahl-ul-Kitāb* (People of the Book), and if it is not as he explained, then it is not permissible by *Ijmā’*, because they are *mushrikeen*. It has been said, that among them there are two-groups. It has been said, (firstly), they are a group from amongst the Christians who read the *Zabur* (Psalms), and they are the ones who appear from that belief. (Secondly) that they believe that the planets are gods and they don’t formally (reveal) what they actually believe. Abu Ḥanifah (premised his argument) upon what is apparent; we structure ours on what is not. Al-Suddi said: ‘They are a group from among the Jews, like al-Sāmira’; Qatādah and Mu’qātil said: ‘They are a people that acknowledge Allah; they worship the angels and they pray to the *Ka'ba*.’ They have taken something from each religion. There is considerable difference (upon this topic) concerning them, if we mentioned each point, it would be lengthy. In fact there is no dispute regarding marriage to them, but rather the dispute arose based on suspicions concerning their groups, each providing a response to their own conditions.’

There is no doubt that Imām Abu Ḥanifah excelled over both his students. He belonged to the distinguished early generations of Islam, likely having lived in the second century, the era of the *Tābi’een*. This is evident from the fact that he met Anas ibn Mālik during his youth and narrated from him. He was a profound *faqih* (legal jurist), and a firm believer in ‘*Imān*. Moreover, unlike his students just mentioned, he was known for engaging in debates with various sects including atheists and *mushrikeen*. One can in fact argue that his overall standing is far higher to that of Ibn Taymiyyah, let alone MIAW and his renegade followers.

In fact, he surpasses both by many thousand degrees, if Allah the Almighty wills. The text of the Qur’ān provides an argument against Abu Ḥanifah, on the proviso that the Qur’ān intended to categorise the Sabians as being *Ahl-ul-Kawākib*. While this is a credible viewpoint in that it sets them apart from being a sect of the Jews or the Christians. However, one must note that such opinions in this area are not definitive nor conclusive, with significant scholarly disagreement existing on this matter overall.

Determining their nature

Then, like an epiphany, we noticed the linguistic structure as expressed in the verse previously mentioned which provides important contextual clues, where He the Mighty and Sublime raised the word relating to ‘the Sabians,’ He said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى مِنْ أَمْنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خُوفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

For the believers, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians - those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good deeds - there is no fear: they will not grieve.¹⁰

It is raised, it is definitely not a noun, because the word or particle ‘*Inna*’ [إِنَّ] was placed at the beginning of the sentence. Certainly this necessitates the conclusion that the intended meaning of the verse is either one of the following: ‘And those who are Jews – and among them are the Sabians, and the Christians.’ Or it means: ‘And those who are Jews, the

¹⁰ *Qur’ān*, 5: 69

Sabians being a group among them; and the Christians.’ Given this, they could rightly be regarded as being a group from among the Jews.

Although speculative, perhaps ‘the Sabians’ were the followers of Yaḥya ibn Zakariyyā – John the Baptist, peace be upon him, who fled the oppression of the Romans and their collaborators from among the Jewish elites. Those elites killed Yaḥya ibn Zakariyyā, and in their belief also crucified someone that they thought was Jesus, son of Mary, peace be upon him. They sought refuge in the land of Iraq, where significant communities of Jews had been residing since the Babylonian captivity, particularly in al-Ḥira (located south of modern day Kufa), taking advantage of the relative tolerance of the Sassanian Empire and their rivalry with Rome. And Allah knows best.

I would argue that it would appear to me, and ultimately Allah knows best, that these *original* Sabians upon monotheism may well have become extinct altogether. Their numbers massively diminished following the Islamic conquest of Iraq, with huge numbers entering into Islam. The remnants of adherents to *Shirk* may have opportunistically seized the opportunity to adopt and label themselves as ‘the Sabians,’ in an attempt to try and deceive the Muslims. Hiding as ‘people of the book,’ they would have intended to gain similar status to the Jews and the Christians. Historical sources seem to show that this was particularly evident in the Syrian city of Harrān. Perhaps those among the elite, priests, philosophers from among the *mushrikeen* of Harrān were keen to present themselves to the Muslims as glorifying the planets / celestial bodies, taking them as a *qiblah* in prayer and supplication, just as the Muslims do so with the *Ka'ba*.

So this notion spread from the outset. Even the great Imām Abu Ḥanifah al-Numān, may Allah be pleased with him, was taken in by this. Yet serious blame cannot be placed upon him, because people are treated with what they say and what they do. Thereafter, the actual truth regarding the matter was eventually outlined by his students, the esteemed judge, Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ibrāhim ibn Habib al-Ansāri al-Kufi and Abu Abdullah Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Farqad al-Shaybāni al-Kufi, having said what they said, outlining the reality of the matter at hand. So Imām Abu Ḥanifah was right, just as the two Imām's Abu Yusuf and Abu Abdullah were also right, because the reality that is being judged is different: everyone agrees that the mere presentation of the rites of glorification has no intrinsic value,

instead the lesson is only about the reality of the content and essence of belief.

2. An analytical exploration of the story of Abraham and his people

In commencing our examination of this narrative, which encompasses profound wisdom and critical knowledge, it is most fitting to begin with a detailed study of the early life of Abraham - Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, as expressed in the Divine Word. He the Exalted has said:

Remember when Abraham said to his father, Azar, ‘How can you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray.’ In this way We showed Abraham [Allah’s] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be a firm believer. When the night grew dark over him he saw a star and said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it set, he said, ‘I do not like things that set.’

And when he saw the moon rising he said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it too set, he said, ‘If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray.’

Then he saw the sun rising and cried, ‘This is my Lord! This is greater.’ But when the sun set, he said, ‘My people, I disown all that you worship beside Allah. I have turned my face as a true believer towards Him who created the heavens and the earth. I am not one of the mushrikeen (polytheists).’

His people argued with him, and he said, ‘How can you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me? I do not fear anything you associate with Him: unless my Lord wills [nothing can happen]. My Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. How can you not take heed?’

Why should I fear what you associate with Him? Why do you not fear to associate with Him things for which He has sent you no authority? Tell me, if you know the answer, which side has more right to feel secure? It is those who

have faith, and do not mix their faith with idolatry, who will be secure, and it is they who are rightly guided.’ Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people— We raise in rank whoever We will— your Lord is all wise, all knowing.¹

Further to this, the Glorious and Majestic Word of Allah has declared:

Long ago We bestowed right judgement on Abraham and We knew him well. He said to his father and his people, ‘What are these images to which you are so devoted?’ They replied, ‘We found our fathers worshipping them.’ He said, ‘You and your fathers have clearly gone astray.’ They asked, ‘Have you brought us the truth or are you just playing about?’ He said, ‘Listen! Your true Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He who created them, and I am a witness to this.

By Allah I shall certainly plot against your idols as soon as you have turned your backs!’ He broke them all into pieces, but left the biggest one for them to return to. They said, ‘Who has done this to our gods? How wicked he must be!’ Some said, ‘We heard a youth called Abraham talking about them.’ They said, ‘Bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may witness [his trial].’ They asked, ‘Was it you, Abraham, who did this to our gods?’ He said, ‘No, it was done by the biggest of them— this one. Ask them, if they can talk.’ They turned to one another, saying, ‘It is you who are in the wrong,’ but then they lapsed again and said, ‘You know very well these gods cannot speak.’

Abraham said, ‘How can you worship what can neither benefit nor harm you, instead of Allah? Shame on you and on the things you worship instead of Allah. Have you no sense?’ They said, ‘Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to do the right thing.’ But We said, ‘Fire, be cool and safe for Abraham.’ They planned to harm him, but We made them suffer the greatest loss. We saved him and Lot [and sent them] to the land We blessed for all people.²

The first verse here only mentions the early bestowal of wisdom upon Ibrāhim peace be upon him without elaborating on the initial consequences of this endowment, followed by a significant temporal leap to the final confrontation with his people. Thus, the context of *Surah al-Anbiyā’* (ch21) provides a

¹ *Qur’ān*, 6: 79/83. Given the length of the verses which are quoted, the Arabic text has been omitted here, and for the following citation too.

² *Qur’ān*, 21: 51/71

summarised account of Ibrāhim's early life in his birthplace, followed by a substantial leap to the final confrontation with his father and people. In contrast, *Surah al-An'ām* (ch6) offers a detailed account of the outcomes of his *Rushd* - or maturity in the early stages. The Qur'ān corroborates itself and clarifies its own meanings: hence, a meticulous and enlightened contemplation of what is elaborated in one instance and summarised in another provides us with the correct sequence of events and allows us to extract valuable truths and lessons.

Firstly, Ibrāhim peace be upon him who was endowed with *Rushd*, began by questioning the religion of his father and people. He became increasingly convinced that they were in manifest error, as his father, who was involved in this initial confrontation, could provide no evidence that these idols, which were merely stone statues to the naked eye, represented in any way the celestial beings they claimed as deities. It is evident that the supposed 'deities' of Ibrāhim's people were the planets, stars, the sun, and the moon, as demonstrated by his contemplation of these celestial bodies, to the exclusion of others, when he began his period of observation and reflection. This is conclusively supported by modern historical and archaeological studies, a fact long known to both ancient and contemporary Muslim scholars. For example, as stated in *Fath al-Bārī* by Ibn Hajar:

Abu Bakr al-Rāzi mentions in his *Ahkām*: 'The people of Babylon were Sabians who worshipped the seven planets, naming them as gods and believing that they were the forces behind everything in the universe. They constructed idols in the names of these planets, each with a temple where offerings were made according to what they believed would please that particular deity, such as specific prayers and (offering) incense. These were the people to whom Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, was sent. Their sciences were centred on the rulings of the stars, and their sorcerers employed various forms of magic, attributing these practices to the actions of the planets to conceal their deception.³

It is mentioned in the works of the esteemed Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yahya al-Mu'allimī al-Yamāni:

³ Ibn Hajar *Fath al-Bārī* [Vol. 13, p. 270 (print edition)]

It has been said that the people of Ibrāhim peace be upon him worshipped *Tamātheel* (statues / figurines) as representations, reminders, or symbols of the celestial bodies, and this is supported by the story of Ibrāhim regarding the stars and his statement, 'This is my Lord,' followed by his declaration, 'But when it too set, he said, 'If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray,' [6: 78]. This indicates that their *Shirk* was related to the celestial bodies. Subsequently, he said: 'I do not fear anything you associate with Him: unless my Lord wills [nothing can happen],' [6: 80] which indicates that they feared their associates and tried to frighten Ibrāhim with them. This would be unlikely or impossible regarding the *Asnām*, for as mentioned earlier, they had acknowledged, or nearly acknowledged, that they offered neither harm nor benefit.

This is further evidenced by the known religion of the ancient Babylonians, who were Sabians - to whom Ibrahim peace be upon him was sent; that they deified Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury. They believed that Saturn had a form depicted as a human head with bird wings, and Mars had the form of a lion with a human head and bird wings, and the same applied to the others. They would create statues of these imagined forms, such as a body of an animal with a human head and bird wings, and worship these statues. What further supports that this was the belief of the people of Ibrahim (peace be upon him) is what Allah the Almighty reported about him in His saying: 'Then he looked up to the stars. He said, "I am sick",' [37: 88/89].

By looking at the stars, he led them to believe that he had learned from them that he would fall ill. When he said, 'Indeed, I am sick,' he meant, 'I will become sick.' The context here is his observation of the stars, leading them to this belief. He spoke the truth in saying that he would become sick, for every human being is susceptible to illness. What has been reported that this statement is among the permissible ambiguities is, Allah knows best, related to his observation of the stars, leading them to believe that he had derived from them that he would become sick, while in reality, he had not gained such knowledge from them; he only led them to believe so. This suggestion of ambiguity is what is meant here, and Allah knows best. The verse indicates that observing the stars and deducing future events from them was known

to the people, and from here – and Allah knows best, they deified the stars.⁴

Thus, I would argue that the Wahhābi background of Shaykh al-Mu'allimī negatively affected his judgment, particularly in his inability to distinguish between a *timthāl* (statue) and *ṣanām* (idol). His comments regarding the statues as ‘representations, reminders, or symbols,’ etc. is incorrect. Rather, a correct formulation would be that they worshipped *Asnām* which were statues and they served as being substitutes for, and are closely associated with, the celestial entities (e.g. the planets).⁵

Further to this, his comments regarding ‘unlikely or impossible regarding the *Asnām*’ is a further error. A better more astute formulation would be that this is impossible regarding statues, for they, as *previously mentioned, admitted, or nearly admitted, that these statues neither bring forth harm nor benefit*. Further clarification on this matter will be provided in due course. Also mentioned in the works of Shaykh al-Mu'allimī:

‘And why then did they deify the planets?’ The aforementioned commentary also notes that they attributed to Jupiter titles such as ‘the Great Lord, the King, the King of the gods, the Glorious God, the Judge, the Eternal One, the Judge of the gods, the Lord of Wars, the King of the Heavens, the Great Lord of Eternity, the Lord of the Universe, the Chief of the gods, and the God of gods.’ To Mars, they ascribed titles such as ‘the God of War and Hunting, the Great Man, the Mighty Hero, the King of War, the Destroyer, and the Tyrant of the gods.’ As for Venus, they referred to her as ‘the Queen of gods and goddesses.’ Mercury, was called ‘the unparalleled Lord of Lords.’ The author of the *Tafsir* deduced from these apparently contradictory descriptions that they were employing hyperbolic praise when referring to these celestial bodies.

In any case, their descriptions of these celestial bodies clearly indicate that they believed these bodies had the ability to govern and manage affairs. The question that remains is - in what manner did they

⁴ *Athār* Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yahyā al-Mu'allimī al-Yamānī [Vol. 2, p. 453]

⁵ Here the Professor re-quotes the excerpts from the aforementioned block-quote. The repetition has been omitted entirely in the present translation.

believe these celestial bodies exercised governance and control? In *al-Milāl wal-Nihāl* by al-Shahrastānī, it is stated:

‘According to them [i.e., the Sabians], *al-Ibdā* – the unique creative act of the Lord, Exalted is He, was the origination of *al-Rūḥāniyyāt* (the spiritual beings), after which He delegated the affairs of the upper world to them. The specific action of these spiritual beings was to set *al-Hayākil* (the celestial bodies) in motion, and then they, in turn, were delegated the governance of the lower world. This is akin to someone constructing a workshop, establishing its pillars - such as the agent, the material, and the form - and then delegating the work to apprentices.’

In *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, it is further elaborated upon:

‘(It is said: They claimed that each celestial sphere possesses a soul) This refers to the belief held by the practitioners of talismans that each celestial sphere has a *rūḥ kullī* (universal soul) that governs its affairs, from which many other souls emanate. For example, the Throne - meaning *al-falak al-a'zam* (the greatest sphere) has a soul that governs all matters within it, referred to as *al-nafs al-kulliyā* (the universal soul) or *al-rūḥ al-a'zam* (the greatest soul), from which many other souls emanate, connected to the various parts and extremities of the Throne.

This is similar to how *al-nafs al-nāfiqa* (the rational soul) governs the human body, possessing natural, animalistic, and psychic faculties corresponding to each organ. This interpretation aligns with the verses: ‘*On the day when the Spirit and the angels stand in rows*,’ [78: 38] and ‘*You will see the angels surrounding the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praise*,’ [39: 75] - and so on for the other celestial spheres.

They also affirmed that each degree of the celestial sphere has a soul, whose influence manifests when the sun enters that degree, and similarly, for each day, each hour, as well as for the seas, mountains, deserts, urban areas, and the various types of plants and animals. This is analogous to what is mentioned in the religious texts regarding the *malak al-arzāq* (angel of provision), *malak al-jibāl* (the angel of the mountains), *malak al-bihār* (the angel of the seas), the *malak al-amṭār* (angel of rain), the *malak al-mawt* (angel of death), and so on.

In sum, just as each human body is endowed with a governing soul, they affirmed that each type of entity, and even each species, has a soul that governs it, referred to as *al-tabā' al-tām* (the perfect nature) of that type, which preserves it from calamities and fears and manifests its influence within the species in the same way that the human soul manifests its influence within the individual.⁶

I say: It appears that they believed these celestial bodies to be animate, as was the opinion of certain philosophers who held that the planets possess souls. Whether these planetary souls, according to them, were of angelic origin or otherwise, Allah knows best.⁶

Broadly, I would argue that this is acceptable in general terms; however, I would like to remind the reader of what we mentioned in the previous chapter on the Sabians. The *mushrikeen* idolaters among the philosophers of Harrān (as well as Jundīshāpūr and Edessa) adopted the title of ‘Sabians’ as a means of deception towards the Muslims, to benefit from the favourable treatment extended to the People of the Book. Moreover, their statements about the beliefs of the Chaldeans represent a philosophised development of the original doctrines, possibly intermingled with the ideas of the Greeks. The most likely scenario, as indicated by the texts and artifacts of the Chaldeans themselves, is that they did not originally have a central supreme deity above or beyond the planets. It is more likely that the planets, in their view, were eternal and uncreated. It is also possible that Jupiter was considered their chief, a leader among equals, rather than a lord over created beings. This characterisation of Jupiter aligns more with the Greek understanding than with the Chaldean, and this point requires further scrutiny or greater detailed examination. As was already quoted earlier from the *Tafsir* of al-Rāzi:

Thirdly, and it is closer (to explaining) who they are, is that they are a people who worship the planets. Thereafter, there are two viewpoints (regarding this). Firstly, that the creator of existence is Allah, may He be Glorified, except that He ordered reverence for the planets; designating them a direction of prayer, supplication and veneration. The second viewpoint, that Allah, may He be Glorified created the heavens and the planets, the latter being responsible for management

⁶ Op cit. [Vol. 2, p. 454]

of worldly affairs, which includes (matters of) good, evil, health and sickness. And He is the creator of it. Therefore, mankind has the necessity to show reverence to them because they are the entities governing the temporal plain. However, they also worship Allah, may He be Glorified. This belief is attributed to the Chaldeans, to whom the Prophet Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, came to, rejecting and refuting their belief.⁷

Here I would argue the claim that the celestial bodies ‘worship Allah,’ is questionable and likely a falsehood which was fabricated by the idol-worshipping philosophers of Harrān, as mentioned earlier. This is because it has not been definitively established that these people recognised a central deity to whom the subordinate deities referred, either by birth or creation. This ‘Abrahamic doubt’ is not akin to the scepticism of the agnostics or those indifferent to the pursuit of truth; rather, it is the doubt of one seeking knowledge and certainty. When he attains a certain level of particular knowledge, he seeks a higher level, as Allah the Exalted informs us in His words:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبِّ أَرْنِي كَفَّ ثُحْيِ الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تُؤْمِنَ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ لَيَطْمَئِنُنَّ قَلْبِيٰ؛ قَالَ فَأْكُلْ أَرْبَعَةَ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصَرَّهُنَّ إِلَيَّكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِيَنِكَ سَعِيًّا وَأَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

And when Abraham said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead,’ He said, ‘Do you not believe, then?’ ‘Yes,’ said Abraham, ‘but just to put my heart at rest.’ So Allah said, ‘Take four birds and train them to come back to you. Then place them on separate hilltops, call them back, and they will come flying to you: know that Allah is all powerful and wise.⁸

Thus, he was a believer who was *certain*, but he sought to ascend from the level of *ilm al-yaqīn* - knowledge of certainty, to the level of *'ayn al-yaqīn* - vision of certainty. Our Prophet, Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, upon whom be the blessings and salutations of the Lord of all worlds, commented on this by saying:

⁷ *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 3, p. 536]

⁸ *Qur'ān*, 2: 260

حدثنا أحمد بن صالح حدثنا بن وهب قال أخبرني يونس عن بن شهاب عن أبي سلمة بن عبد الرحمن وسعيد بن المسيب عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله قال نحن أحق بالشك من إبراهيم إذ قال (رب أرني كيف تحيي الموتى قال أو لم تؤمن قال بل ولكن ليطمئن قلبي)؛ ويرحم الله لوطا لقد كان يأوي إلى ركن شديد؛ ولو لبشت في السجن طول ما لبست يوسف لأجبت الداعي

Aḥmad ibn Ṣāliḥ narrated to us Ibn Wahb narrated to us he said Yunus reported to me from Ibn Shihāb from Abu Salamah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān and Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib from Abu Hurayrah, that the Messenger of Allah said: *We have more cause to be in doubt than Abraham when he said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead,’* He said, ‘Do you not believe, then?’ ‘Yes,’ said Abraham, ‘but just to put my heart at rest.’ May Allah bestow His Mercy upon Lot; he wanted to have a powerful support. If I were to stay in prison (for a period equal to) the stay of Joseph and then the offer of freedom came to me, then I would have accepted it.⁹

Naturally, Ibrāhīm peace be upon him had no evidence to suggest that these celestial bodies were themselves divine beings. Rather, *his father and his people* held onto the inherited traditions of their forefathers, which were merely unfounded stories and baseless claims. Referring to the assertions of others who have not provided irrefutable proof of their infallibility is a weak argument, one that Ibrāhīm, who was endowed with sound judgment by Allah, would not accept. This is the approach that should be taken by anyone of sound intellect. True guidance is the correct use of sound reasoning, which is essentially rationality. Whoever makes a claim without providing evidence is a liar, and whoever firmly believes in something without having evidence is a misguided liar.

Therefore, Ibrāhīm said to his father: ‘I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray.’ Even if their claim itself was correct based on other evidence. At the same time, there was no proof that these celestial bodies were not divine beings. So, what is the truth, and what is the correct stance? Here, the grace of Allah intervenes with Ibrāhīm peace be upon him, as he had earned it by exerting all his effort in using his intellect correctly. Allah inspired him to observe, monitor, and contemplate the dominion of the

⁹ *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* [Vol. 3, no. 3192]. Agreed upon. Further references this *hadīth* are listed, including *Sahīh Muslim* [Vol. 1, no. 151], *Sunan Ibn Mājah* [Vol. 2, no. 4026] and *Sunan al-Kubrā* by al-Nasā’i [Vol. 6, no. 11050].

heavens and the earth, perhaps to discover if there was anything in them worthy of being considered divine, particularly these celestial bodies that his people claimed were divine beings:

Remember when Abraham said to his father, Azar, ‘How can you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray.’ In this way We showed Abraham [Allah’s] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be a firm believer. When the night grew dark over him he saw a star and said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it set, he said, ‘I do not like things that set.’

And when he saw the moon rising he said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it too set, he said, ‘If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray.’

Then he saw the sun rising and cried, ‘This is my Lord! This is greater.’ But when the sun set, he said, ‘My people, I disown all that you worship beside Allah I have turned my face as a true believer towards Him who created the heavens and the earth. I am not one of the polytheists.’

*His people argued with him, and he said, ‘How can you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me? I do not fear anything you associate with Him: unless my Lord wills [nothing can happen]. My Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. How can you not take heed? Why should I fear what you associate with Him? Why do you not fear to associate with Him things for which He has sent you no authority? Tell me, if you know the answer, which side has more right to feel secure?*¹⁰

Given the above, this leads to several important conclusions. This reflection and reasoning by Ibrāhīm peace be upon him, were *genuine* attempts to reach the *truth of divinity* through observation and contemplation. It was not merely a part of his debate with his people. The verse, ‘*In this way We showed Abraham [Allah’s] mighty dominion,*’ is a clear indication that this contemplation was a transition from doubt to certainty. This necessarily implies that he had not yet received Prophethood, Prophethood and divine selection came thereafter. We should recall what we established in the second chapter of this book, where we said: in any case, the necessity of reason dictates that for anyone whom Allah appoints as a Prophet, even as a favour and an act of divine selection, without being tasked with conveying a message,

¹⁰ *Qur’ān*, 6: 74/81. Again, given the length of the verses quoted, the Arabic has been omitted.

it is imperative that such a person knows with unwavering certainty that he is a Prophet, that Allah has chosen him, and that the One who selected him is *Allah*, the One, the Eternal, the Living, the Sustainer, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of all worlds, the One who does what He wills, and who has power over all things, creating whatever He wills and choosing as He wills, and who is All-Knowing. This must be made known to him by Allah; otherwise, it would be as if Allah were saying, ‘I have made you a Prophet but have not informed you,’ or ‘I have made you a Prophet without telling you who I am,’ which would be a contradiction and confusion, something that even the most rational humans would reject, let alone the Lord of all worlds!

Furthermore, in the verse, ‘*when he saw the moon rising*,’ also implies that his contemplation was in search of certainty and guidance, and a way to emerge from doubt and misguidance. Broadly, this is the argument of Imām al-Ṭabārī, as he explained in his *Tafsīr*: ‘Abu Ja‘far said - In Allah’s report about what Ibrāhīm said when the moon set, ‘*If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray*,’ there is evidence of the error of those people’s statements and that the correct view is to acknowledge Allah’s report about him and disregard anything else.’¹¹ He was correct and thorough in this, although some have objected, suggesting that Ibrāhīm’s words *might* have been out of humility, expressing his need for guidance, as befits the stance of one who prays. This is a baseless doubt that is refuted by the context itself, as he continued his inquiry and contemplation regarding the state of the sun. Then, after the sun set, he proclaimed loudly: ‘*My people, I disown all that you worship beside Allah...*’ He made this declaration with full confidence and conviction. So, where is the humility here? His people then began to argue with him after this bold proclamation.

What kind of debate lasts for nights and days? Hence, the fact that this was a genuine contemplation and reasoning by Ibrāhīm peace be upon him is an undeniable truth, which was also supported by the majority of the exegetes, as stated in the *Tafsīr* of al-Qurṭubī:

‘*Long ago We bestowed right judgement on Abraham and We knew him well*,’ [21: 51] means, according to al-Farrā’, that We gave him his

¹¹ *Tafsīr al-Ṭabārī* [Vol. 5, p. 236 (print edition)]

guidance *before*, meaning before Prophethood. Namely, We granted him success in contemplation and reasoning when the night covered him, and he saw the star, the moon, and the sun. It was also said: ‘*Long ago*,’ meaning before Musa and Hārūn, and *Rushd* here refers to Prophethood. The majority of the exegetes favour the first view.¹²

In light of this, it therefore necessarily follows that this matter occurred at the beginning of Ibrāhīm’s journey when he was still resident in his original homeland – Ur of the Chaldeans. This wasn’t in Harrān after he had migrated, an error which is falsely claimed by many exegetes. The ‘gods’ that were worshipped by the people of Ibrāhīm were primarily ‘celestial beings’ or entities. The sky was viewed as being a realm of permanence, purity, and order. Many ancient peoples in general held this view, particularly among the people of Iraq at that time. Such a matter has been well attested to across the disciplines of archaeology and history.

If the people of Ibrāhīm had a belief in ‘inferior’ secondary ‘gods’ of a demonic variety, it is possible that, in their belief, these ‘gods’ were originally ‘heavenly’ but then rebelled - and/or were expelled from the heavens, and were forced into the lower earth - they are a branch of an original source. Hence there isn’t a need to dwell upon their conditions independently. If the original source is invalid, the branch is invalid as well; or they are originally ‘earthly’ and do not require much consideration worthy of mention because change and corruption on earth are too obvious to need extensive consideration. This is also confirmed by the sciences of archaeology, history, and material excavations: there is mention of a ‘female goddess’ of theirs called ‘Allāt’ or ‘Ereshkigal,’ who rules the underworld, and idols and images of this ‘Allāt’ have been found, some of which were mentioned previously in this present work.

Although Ibrāhīm peace be upon him had judged his people to be misguided given that they built their erroneous religion upon the tradition of following their forefathers, he didn’t consider their claims to be invalidated *solely* upon that basis. Rather, it was necessary to properly deconstruct and demonstrate their underlying falsehood, which is accordance with the principle set out in the verse:

¹² *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī* [Vol. 11, p. 296]

وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَنِ الْهُدَى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

[One party of us] must be rightly guided and the other clearly astray.¹³

There is a clear falsehood that has been perpetuated, at first by the Europeans, but now held more generally within the West as a whole – that philosophical inquiry begins with the Greeks. Here, the Qur’ānic narrative of Ibrāhim peace be upon him shows that this Euro-centric viewpoint is utterly false.

Ibrāhim peace be upon him who reached a level of certainty through the medium of his sharp observation and deep contemplation, was then chosen by Allah as a Prophet, began inviting his people, raising doubts about their religion and questioning the reality of these *Tamātheel*. Indeed, he refused to call them gods or even *Aṣnām*. Probing questioned were asked of his people concerning the meaning of their dedication to them, including their performance of strange practices undertaken for them. His people clapped, whistled, swayed, danced, rang bells, beat drums, and blew horns and flutes for these ‘gods.’ They may have even sought counsel, drawn lots, offered direct blood-sacrifices, including the smearing of blood and other such things, notwithstanding divination or cleromancy. Here, this point was noted by Sayyid Qutb in his seminal work, *In the Shade of the Qur’ān*:

The way he put this question is indicative of his sharp sense of what is right. He gave those stones and wooden shapes their true names, ‘these are statues.’ He did not call them ‘deities.’ Indeed, he stated his disapproval of their worship of those statues by using the word ‘devoted,’ which indicates a permanent action. Needless to say, those people did not devote all their time to worshipping them, but they nonetheless attached great respect to them. This is, then, devotion in an abstract sense. The way Abraham put the question, describing them as permanent devotees to such statues, indicates that he considered their action absolutely absurd. They defended their action by saying: ‘We found our forefathers worshipping them,’ [21: 53]. Their answer indicates that they were in a stone-like inflexible state of mind that chained them to absurd traditions. They were far removed from freedom of thought, reflection and the proper evaluation of things and

¹³ Qur’ān, 34: 24

situations which belief in Allah generates as it breaks the chains of imaginary, baseless and traditional sanctities.¹⁴

For Ibrāhim’s father, their reply was that these entities aren’t mere *Tamātheel*, (statues), but rather they are *Aṣnām*, the worship thereof being inherited through their forefathers.. Here the explicit mention of the word *Aṣnām* to which they referred them as. The Qur’ānic verses specifically outline that, clarified in the manifest text where He the Mighty and Sublime said:

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ, إِذْ قَالَ لِأَيْبِهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ, قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَاماً فَنَظَرَ لَهَا عَاكِفِينَ, قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ, أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ, قَالُوا بَلْ نَدْعُنَا أَبَاهُنَا كَذَلِكَ يَقُولُونَ, قَالَ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ, أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمُ الْأَقْدَمُونَ, فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِي إِلَّا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ, الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ, وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِنُنِي وَيَسْقِنِي, وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِيَنِي, وَالَّذِي يُمْسِيَنِي ثُمَّ يُعْصِيَنِي, وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

Tell them the story of Abraham, when he asked his father and his people, ‘What do you worship?’ They said, ‘We worship idols, and are constantly in attendance on them.’ He asked, ‘Do they hear you when you call? Do they help or harm you?’ They replied, ‘No, but this is what we saw our fathers doing.’

Abraham said, ‘Those idols you have worshipped, you and your forefathers, are my enemies; not so the Lord of the Worlds, who created me. It is He who guides me; He who gives me food and drink; He who cures me when I am ill; He who will make me die and then give me life again; and He who will, I hope, forgive my faults on the Day of Judgement.¹⁵

Conceptual expression as equations

There is a crucial point here. In their belief, these objects are statues of ‘gods,’ that stand *in place* of the ‘gods’ in some sense or another. They are closely connected and associated with the supposed *divine entity they represent*. This connection legitimises the statement that is often expressed as: ‘I worship this idol’ as a concise and acceptable expression for those who say it. This is instead of saying a rather longer formulation: ‘I worship such-and-such god, which this idol represents.’ We have seen earlier that most of these ‘gods,’ according to the people of Ibrāhim, are nothing but celestial bodies which

¹⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur’ān* [Vol. 12, p. 41]

¹⁵ Qur’ān, 26: 69/82

appear to mankind, be they the sun, the moon, stars or planets. Noteworthy is how the Qur'ān has expressed this single meaning with two different phrases: 'Do you take idols as gods?' and 'We worship idols.' This necessitates the following equivalences or equations:

عبادة الصنم = اتخاذ الصنم إلهًا = نسبة شيء من الألوهية إلى الصنم

Worshipping the idol = Taking the idol as a god = Attributing something related to divinity to the idol

In other words, and by way of a concise formulation we have:

العبادة = نسبة شيء من الألوهية

Ibādah (worship) = Attributing something from divinity

Necessarily, this follows where the notion of *Shirk bil'Allah*, polytheism in relation to Allah, is a matter of '*Ibādah ghayr Allah*', namely worshipping *other* than Allah. Expressed equationally this would be as follows:

الشرك بالله = عبادة غير الله = نسبة الألوهية لغير الله = أن تجعل مع الله إلهًا آخر

Shirk with Allah = Worshipping other than Allah = Attributing divinity to *something other* than Allah = To make another god alongside Allah

However, if the definition of *Shirk* with Allah is that of associating *another god* with Allah, then the prescription would necessary follow as being:

الشرك بالله = أن تجعل مع الله إلهًا آخر = نسبة الألوهية لغير الله = عبادة غير الله

Shirk with Allah = Associating *another god* with Allah = The attribution of divinity to *something other than Allah* = worshipping *other than Allah*.

Irrespective of the initial definition of *Shirk* that was outlined, the final end result is necessarily the same. It is the latter equation that would apply. Proofs of these equations have been provided independently and thoroughly apart from this. Ibrāhim peace be upon him asked them for evidence of the supposed divinity such beings when he said:

فَلَمْ يَسْمَعُونَكُمْ إِذْ تَدْعُونَ؛ أَوْ يَنْفَعُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَضُرُّونَ

He asked, 'Do they hear you when you call? Do they help or harm you?'¹⁶

His people responded that their 'evidence,' for want of a better word, is the views which were held by their 'righteous predecessors.' In other words, that their ancestors held accurate knowledge and understanding of the matter. It didn't mean that they formally admitted their 'gods' weren't able to hear or respond, or that they provided neither harm nor benefit as those whose minds are corrupted, like the fools from the sect of Wahhābism. Others like them also misread the verses where He the Exalted says:

فَلَمْ يَقُلْ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَالْسَّأْلُوْهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطَلِقُونَ، فَرَجُلُوْهُمْ إِلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ، لَمْ يُكْسِبُوْهُمْ عَلَى رُوُّسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ مَا هُوَلَاءِ يَنْطَلِقُونَ، قَالَ أَفَقَعْدُوْنَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ، أَفَلَمْ وَلِمَا تَبْعَدُوْنَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفْلَأْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ، قَالُوا حَرَقُوهُ وَانْصُرُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعْلَمْ

He said, 'No, it was done by the biggest of them - this one. Ask them, if they can talk.' They turned to one another, saying, 'It is you who are in the wrong,' but then they lapsed again and said, 'You know very well *these cannot speak*.'

Abraham said, 'How can you worship what can neither benefit nor harm you, instead of Allah? Shame on you and on the things you worship instead of Allah.

Have you no sense?' They said, 'Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to do the right thing.'¹⁷

The entities cannot speak, as was unanimously agreed by all, and Ibrāhim knows this too, is these *Tamātheel* made of stone, all of which are smashed except for the largest of them, which was referred to as 'these.' Without equivocation, Ibrāhim is certain and insistent, as he has established proofs which have been mentioned earlier, and moreover will be further detailed shortly, that the supposed celestial 'gods' worshipped by his people don't exist at all. Hence there is nothing in existence except for these mere stones. Thus, the response given by Ibrāhim, as shown by verses 66/67 above: '*How can you worship what can neither benefit nor harm you, instead of Allah? Shame on you and on the things you worship instead of Allah. Have you no sense?*'

¹⁶ Qur'ān, 26: 72/73

¹⁷ Qur'ān, 21: 63/68

Whenever we find in the Qur'ān statements about the supposed worshipped deities of the *mushrikeen*, outlining that they neither harm nor benefit, or that they do not hear or see, or that they do not act or wield power, or similar such descriptions, it is a declaration by the Qur'ān of the *true nature* of the matter as it is in the knowledge of Allah. Or, it is a recounting of what a Prophet declared during his debate with his people. It is not a narration of the beliefs of the *mushrikeen* as they exist in their warped misguided imaginations.

This is what must be affirmed with certainty through both sense and reason; it is utterly impossible for a rational person to call upon an inanimate, deaf, blind, and lifeless object, while fully believing it to be exactly that - just an inanimate, deaf, blind, and lifeless object. There *must* necessarily be, within the imagination of the supplicant, *something else* beyond that. Even if we were to find a patient in a mental institution engaging in a conversation with his shoe or his pen, we would conclude that due to a disorder in his brain, he imagines that he hears speech from it and holds a dialogue with it; the poor individual lives in a fictional world created by his disturbed mind. By way of another example, even animals and birds only flee from a scarecrow in a field due to their limited perception, *mistaking* it for a human being, whose harm they fear. If they realised it was merely a piece of cloth shaped like a human and hung on a stick, they would pay no attention to it, just as they usually ignore a swaying tree or a branch moving in the wind. In his acclaimed *Tafsir*, al-Rāzi had *almost* come to elucidating the reality which underpins the worship of the *Asnām*:

It can be said that the '*Aāqil* (rationally discerning individual) does not worship the *ṣanām* (idol) because it is made of wood or stone. Rather, they worship it because they believe it is *Tamātheel* (statues) (which represent) celestial bodies, heavenly spirits, *Tamātheel* of Prophets, or the *Ṣāliheen* (righteous), those who have passed away. Their intention in worshipping these is to direct their worship towards those things of which they made these *Tamātheel* (and) *ṣiwar* (images) for. The essence of the argument of '*Ubbādil Asnām* (those that worship idols) is that they say the supreme Deity is too exalted to be worshipped directly by humans. However, it is more fitting for humans to engage in the worship of the greatest among Allah's servants, such as the celestial bodies and heavenly spirits. These in turn, worship the

supreme Deity. This is what they mean by their statement: '*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah*,' [39: 3].¹⁸

Without doubt, al-Rāzi's comments regarding the rational person not worshipping a mere inanimate piece of wood or stone is correct and reasonable. Yet the latter analysis he presents significantly lacks precision. Reformulated and rephrased, it would have been more apt to state that they worship them in the belief that they are representations of supposed divine beings. Be that in relation to celestial bodies or entities, angels or other such spirit-type entities. Or if representations of Prophets and the righteous, who have had divine qualities attributed to them, or even if relating to other types of representation, such as demonic entities and spirits or the like.¹⁹

Where al-Rāzi begins with the mention of the one who is '*Aāqil*', this refers to an individual who retains a minimum level of required reason to be addressed with the responsibilities or obligations in matters of the *Deen*. It is in contrast to those below that level of maturity, for example a child or one who is mentally incapacitated. He doesn't limit intent to only a fully mature and thoughtful rational person. Some criticism needs to be levelled though where he argues that 'they say the supreme Deity is too exalted to be worshipped directly by humans.' This is coupled with his self-contradictory comment on 'the worship of the greatest among Allah's servants.' It is like that because it is impossible to say that the 'stars and spirits' are worshipped *unless* there is a *prior belief* in their divinity. It is impossible to worship Prophets *merely* as Prophets, or angels *merely* as angels. Their being 'the greatest among Allah's servants' is no doubt a reality and is the belief of al-Rāzi and all Muslims, but it is *not the belief* of those who worship them. So, one must take serious heed.

Further to this, there are some additional sub-matters that need to be taken into consideration, for there are other justifications that are advanced from the vantage point of the *mushrikeen*. Often these invariably include the following:

¹⁸ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 26, p. 421 (Shamela edition)]. The Arabic edition provides a greater excerpt for the quotation. For the translation, this has been abbreviated to its most relevant part as highlighted by the Professor.

¹⁹ Most of the paragraph here have been reordered to exclude the repetition that occurs in the Arabic edition. There, the Professor re-quotes the comments from al-Rāzi in full. For ease of perusal that has been omitted.

- a) The notion that the ‘chief god’ and ‘father,’ rejoices in the worship of his children, and rewards it. Therefore, in essence, it is worship of him and an offering to him, necessarily.
- b) That the children of the ‘chief god,’ ‘the father,’ holds a premier status with their father. Their intercession is never rejected and does not require permission. Thus, for humans, worshiping the children is sufficient to achieve the desired outcome.
- c) That the ‘chief god’ and ‘father’ is distant, arrogant, and exalted, and can only be reached through intermediaries. Many *mushrikeen* have held the view that the very notion of this ‘distance’ is a distinct quality of perfection attributed to the ‘greatest god.’
- d) That the ‘chief god’ is somehow powerless, not being able to act or create except through the medium of intermediaries. Here, this isn’t a surprise that many *mushrikeen* have held to this, with the warped idea it is a quality of perfection that must be attributed to the ‘greatest god,’ as he doesn’t become embroiled in earthly or temporal matters stained by corruption.

All of this can be applied in relation to Ibrāhim with regards to this father and people. They were convinced and adamant about their false beliefs which were inherited from their ancestors. Those beliefs included the existence of those supposed ‘exalted heavenly gods,’ deemed worthy of support. For that very reason, they struck out:

قُلُّوا حَرَقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا لِهِنَّمَ إِنْ كُنْنُمْ فَاعْلَمُونَ

They said, ‘Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to do the right thing.’²⁰

Support for these ‘gods’ that they held is manifestly clear here. These were the ‘deities’ that Ibrāhim peace be upon him had disbelieved in; he denied their very existence, coupled with his acts, no doubt they would have construed that as a massive insult and ‘blasphemy.’ The debate and confrontation occurred much later, after the events of our present analysis. Ibrāhim peace be upon him had migrated thereafter, when Allah saved him

²⁰ *Qur’ān*, 21: 68

from the fire, and he left his homeland. Despite the clarity and obviousness of this matter, we find that the distinguished scholar ‘Abdar-Rahmān bin Yahyā al-Mu’allimī is struck with blindness of insight due to being affected by the deadly Wahhābi mind-virus, as he says:

The matter to be determined here is - does this indicate that his people were worshipping the planets? Some of the *mufassireen* have said so, but it was actually the worship of *Aṣnām*. The people deified the *Aṣnām*, worshipped them, invoked them, and made them partners. Did they believe that these *Aṣnām* themselves had the power to bring benefit or harm? It seems unlikely, as when Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, asked them: ‘*He asked, ‘Do they hear you when you call? Do they help or harm you?’ They replied, ‘No, but this is what we saw our fathers doing,’* [26: 72/74] it appears that if they had believed the *Aṣnām* could harm or benefit, they wouldn’t have resorted to relying on inherited tradition.

In fact, their use of the word ‘*bal*,’ suggests they conceded that the *Aṣnām* neither hear, harm, nor benefit. This is further supported by the fact that when Ibrāhim broke them while they were absent and they were told that he had been heard mentioning them before, they did not find his ability to break them far-fetched. When he said to them: ‘*He said, ‘No, it was done by the biggest of them - this one. Ask them, if they can talk.’ They turned to one another, saying, ‘It is you who are in the wrong,’ but then they lapsed again and said, ‘You know very well these gods cannot speak,’* [21: 63/65].

(Also) when he asked them: ‘*He said to his father, ‘Father, why do you worship something that can neither hear nor see nor benefit you in any way?’* [19: 42], they avoided answering and instead had said: ‘*Burn him and avenge your gods,*’ [21: 68]. This is also evidenced by his words to his father: ‘*He said to his father, ‘Father, why do you worship something that can neither hear nor see nor benefit you in any way?’* [19: 42], to which he didn’t respond by claiming the *Aṣnām* could help him, but he had replied ‘*His father answered, ‘Abraham, do you reject my gods? I will stone you if you do not stop this. Keep out of my way!’* [19: 46]. So, why were they worshipping them then?²¹

²¹ *Athār Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yahyā al-Mu’allimī al-Yamāni* [Vol. 2, p. 451]

In light of this, I would say – can you now see the damage that Wahhābi thought has inflicted upon the mind with its rejection of thought? How the people have insisted upon it so unconsciously so that their distorted, fabricated religion does not collapse? Indeed it is immensely unfortunate that this distinguished scholar has been afflicted with such blindness of insight that he cannot clearly distinguish between a *Timthāl* – a statue, and that of a *Sanam*, an idol. Recall to mind the equation:

الصنم = التمثال + علاقة الارتباط المحكم بکان إلهي، والنیابة عنه

al-Sanam = *al-Timthāl* + A strong direct association with a (supposed) divine being, and a representation of it

Despite being a memoriser of the Qur’ān, al-Mu’allimī was unable to understand the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān in its brevity of recounting stories and the concise rendering of debates that occurred against opponents, either because the details are not important, or because they are left out relying on the reader’s insight, or for other considerations. Take for an example where He the Exalted and Majestic says:

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنَهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفَرَاءُ فَاقْعَدَ لَوْنَهَا سَرُّ الظَّاهِرِيِّينَ، قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّمَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمْهَتُونَ، قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا ذُولَنَ شَيْرُ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسْلَمَةً لَا شِيَةً فِيهَا قَالُوا إِنَّمَا جَنَّتْ بِالْحَقِّ فَبَأْبُوهَا وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

They said, ‘Call on your Lord for us, to show us what colour it should be.’ He answered, ‘Allah says it should be a bright yellow cow, pleasing to the eye.’

They said, ‘Call on your Lord for us, to show us [exactly] what it is: all cows are more or less alike to us. With Allah’s will, we shall be guided.’ He replied,

‘It is a perfect and unblemished cow, not trained to till the earth or water the fields.’ They said, ‘Now you have brought the truth,’ and so they slaughtered it, though they almost failed to do so.²²

Is there any doubt in the mind of a rational person that they went searching for a ‘yellow cow’ for days and nights until the matter became confusing for them, while the murdered man lay there unchanged, neither decomposing nor swelling? Then, after they returned and complained, ‘all cows are more or

²² Qur’ān, 2: 69/71

less alike to us,’ he told them that it was ‘It is a perfect and unblemished cow, not trained to till the earth or water the fields.’ So they went searching through the land until they found the desired cow and bought it at an exorbitant price, while the murdered man lay there unchanged, neither decomposing nor swelling. Did any of this appear in the text of the Qur’ān?

Secondly, another example, He the Exalted and Majestic said: ‘When he reached maturity, We gave him judgement and knowledge: this is how We reward those who do good. The woman in whose house he was living tried to seduce him...’ [12: 22/23]. Is there any doubt in the mind of a rational person that the wife of al-Aziz embraced him (Yusuf) as if he were her own son, cared for him, and raised him? But when he grew up, and his exceptional beauty and full manliness became apparent, her feelings shifted from maternal to those of carnal desire. After some time, she could no longer bear it, so she began to plan and scheme. One day, she seized the opportunity of a clear day, with her husband absent—having left Yusuf behind and not taking him along that day, invited Yusuf to her chamber to discuss some household matters. Yusuf, in his innocence, went to her, seeing her as nothing but a mother. She opened the conversation, expressed her love, then locked the doors, etc. Did any of this appear in the text of the Qur’ān?

There is a clear inability to distinguish between the nature of a *sanam* and a *Timthāl* underpinning the source of confession which then borders upon obsession, as demonstrated in the following quote from al-Mu’allimī. Coupled with that, there’s a skewed reading and failure to notice the miraculous nature of the Qur’ānic text in its expression:

*So why were they worshiping them? It appears from their response when they said, ‘but this is what we saw our fathers doing,’ [26: 74] along with what has been previously mentioned, that they were worshiping them merely to preserve their customs and the traditions of their forefathers, out of pride and refusal to abandon them. It is narrated about some of the *mushrikeen* of Quraysh that they were convinced of the falsehood of their practices, but they found it difficult to admit that both they and their ancestors had been misguided. This is supported by the fact that when Ibrāhim peace be upon him broke the *Asnām*, he said, ‘No, it was done by the biggest of them - this one. Ask them, if they can talk.’ They turned to one another, saying, ‘It is you who are in the wrong,’ [21: 63/64]. In this, there is an acknowledgment*

that the *Aṣnām* neither harm nor benefit, and they were only turned upside down in shame simply to maintain their customs.

Had they worshiped the *Tamātheel* as representations of other things, they would have shifted in both instances - and Allah knows best - to claim that they were not worshiping the idols for their own sake but rather as a way to honour the beings the *Tamātheel* represented, for example. Moreover, if they had worshiped the statues with this intention, they would have been worshiping those beings that the statues represented. In that case, the debate between Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, and his people would have included mention of that, just as it did in the case of our Prophet, peace be upon him, and other Prophets. In fact, the majority of what our Prophet, peace be upon him, addressed in the Qur'ān does not mention idols themselves, but rather his arguments with the *mushrikeen* often focused on angels and imaginary daughters.²³

The breaking of the statues was nothing but a final (desperate) attempt by Ibrāhim to awaken his people from their slumber through the method of violent shock to open the door to debate for the last time. Breaking a *ṣanām* is not an argument for the invalidity of its supposed divinity; the defeat of true believers is not evidence of the non-existence of Allah, or proof of Allah's abandonment of them, as may be suggested by some crippled, ailing minds. This was after a long time of argument and debate with compelling arguments and strong proofs.

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازَ غَمَّةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَتَ قَالَ يَا قَوْمَ إِنِّي بِرَبِّي عَمَّا شَرَّكُونَ، إِنِّي وَجَهْتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ، وَحَاجَهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَنْحَاجُوْنِي
فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِي وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا شَرَّكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسَعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَلَمًا أَفَلَا
تَتَذَكَّرُونَ، وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزَلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ
الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ، الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ
مُهَمَّدُونَ، وَتَأْكُلُ حُجَّتَنَا أَتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ تَرْفَعُ دُرَجَاتٍ مَّنْ تَشَاءَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلَيْهِ

Then he saw the sun rising and cried, 'This is my Lord! This is greater.' But when the sun set, he said, 'My people, I disown all that you worship beside Allah. I have turned my face as a true believer towards Him who created the heavens and the earth. I am not one of the mushrikeen.' His people argued with

²³ *Athār* Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Yaḥyā al-Mu'allimī al-Yamānī [Vol. 2, p. 452]

him, and he said, 'How can you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me? I do not fear anything you associate with Him: unless my Lord wills [nothing can happen].

My Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. How can you not take heed? Why should I fear what you associate with Him? Why do you not fear to associate with Him things for which He has sent you no authority? Tell me, if you know the answer, which side has more right to feel secure? It is those who have faith, and do not mix their faith with idolatry who will be secure, and it is they who are rightly guided.' Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people - We raise in rank whoever We will - your Lord is all wise, all knowing.²⁴

It can only be imagined that this statement came from him because they threatened him with the wrath and vengeance of their gods. This, in addition to what has been previously explained, is definitive proof that they believed in the divinity of these gods, attributing to them an independent power of governance and the ability to bestow benefit or inflict harm autonomously.

²⁴ *Qur'ān*, 6: 78/83

3. The Abrahamic Tradition

Given the preceding analytical discussion, we now turn to liberating the underlying principles related to the line of Abrahamic reasoning to derive some of its key points and critical implications.¹ After the initial encounter with his father, Ibrāhim peace be upon him, headed immediately to seriously ponder upon the celestial heavenly bodies, and carefully observing their conditions, with the notion that he may find among them one who deserves to be titled as ‘This is my Lord.’ Here meaning, this is my master and my owner; the possessor of the upmost dominance, holding prerogative of command. Rationally, this can only be the God who is *Wājib al-Wujud* - the Necessarily Existent, acting by way of the ultimate will and choice, and this cannot be except a single-being, not a multiplicity. So, is it this celestial body as our people have alleged? When it set, it became clear that a) either that entity is acting out of necessity, not by will and choice; hence it cannot be construed as a god or lord; or b), is that celestial entity contingent in its existence, not necessary. This is because the Necessary Being is every present, eternal and perpetual. If it is existing in one place, it must exist everywhere, hence that is impossible and absurd for it to disappear.

By implication, the same reasoning would also apply to the remainder of the celestial bodies and entities, be that the sun, the moon, or a particular star. Here, Ibrāhim peace be upon him arrived at the definitive truth: *all* the celestial bodies and entities cannot be entitled as ‘This is my Lord.’ Thus it became manifestly clear that all of them must be contingent, governed,

¹ Broadly, this is the rendered title from the Arabic edition. Included here within the body text given its length.

originated and ultimately created. That would also apply even more so to the earth, and all that reside upon it. In the temporal world of the earth, contingency, change, decay are more pronounced, obvious and apparent. The Lord, must *necessarily* be something other than all of that. It must necessarily be the One being who brought all into existence, meaning, who initiated creation itself, including that of the heavens and the earth. Without doubt, this is an absolute necessity.

Scholarly discourse

Turning to some of the previous scholarly discussion in this respect, Shaykh Muḥammad Abu Zahra elucidated the following in his work, *Zahratul Tafāseer*:

Allah the Almighty has affirmed what He gave to Ibrāhim, with use of the letter *lām* [لـ] and the (definite) particle [هـ]. *Rushd*, maturity and righteousness refers here to the knowledge, recognition and awareness in reaching the cognisance of Allah the Almighty in the midst of ignorance that had clouded peoples intellects, preventing them from proper understanding. He (Ibrāhim) recognised by observation of the star that set, then the moon, and finally the sun, up until he realised (divine) Oneness. All of this represents maturity, sound awareness and a complete recognition of the notion of divinity – the One that is free from resemblance to the transient events, such as the rising and setting (of celestial bodies); free from similarity to the impermanence of created entities.²

With regards to Imām Fakhr al-Deen al-Rāzi, he commented upon this in several places in his work of *Tafsir*:

The Third Issue. Know, that He the Exalted commanded the worship of Him and the command relating to His worship is premised upon cognisance of His existence. The knowledge of His existence was not necessary but rather (made) inferentially; thus necessary to delineate the evidence proving His existence. Know, that we clarified in *al-*

² Abu Zahra *Zahratul Tafāseer* [Vol. 21, p. 4881]. An open-access version is available via *The Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/Zahrat_Altafaseer/00.0/>

Kutub al-‘Aqliyyah that the way to prove His existence, the Exalted, is either (by way of the) *Haduth* or *al-Imkān*. All of them are either in the essences or in the contingencies, so the total ways to prove the existence of Allah are six, no more on that...The third of them, is *Haduth al-Ajsām*. And into it is the indication in the saying of Ibrāhim peace be upon him: ‘*I do not like things that set*,’ [6: 76].³

This probably isn’t in the context of *Haduth al-Ajsām*, ‘the occurrence of bodies,’ but more fitting within the realm of *al-Imkān* - ‘possibility,’ as al-Rāzi comprehended himself in other places. Detailed here as follows:

The Second Issue: Those who are considered wise have agreed unanimously that He the Almighty, Exalted, is beyond coming and going and there are ways to prove it. Firstly, what is proven in ‘*Ilm al-Uṣul*, that anything capable of coming and going, can’t be separated from motion and being static, both of which (states of being) are created. That which cannot be separated from what is created, must itself be a created (entity). That which is subject to such motion necessarily, is created. (Hence) it is impossible for the Eternal God to be like that.

Second, everything which is in motion, from one position to another, must either be small and insignificant, like an indivisible part, universally dismissed by the rational minded, or it is something large. Concerning the large, one side will differ from another, making it composed of parts. Anything that is composed of parts, requires the existence of each part for the whole to exist. Each, being distinct from the others. Anything composed of parts is dependent upon something else, thereby being contingent in its essence. All contingent things in essence, require a determining factor or creator for its existence. Hence, contingency in this way is created, prior to which was non-existence. The Eternal God can’t be subject to such conditions.

Third. Everything capable of motion, from place to place, must be limited, finite. Therefore, it is confined to a specific size. Reason dictates invariably it could either be greater or lesser in size; determination of such arises from a determination, a deciding factor, or

³ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 2, p. 332 (Shamela edition)].

specific cause. Determination of a thing in this matter, is by the act of an Agent, with will. Hence that thing borne of an Agent with will, is created, brought into existence. The Eternal God can’t be subject to such conditions.

Fourth. If we grant that something capable of coming and going (presence and absence), to be eternal, an ancient God, then we wouldn’t (in principle) be able to deny the matter of divinity attributed to the moon and the sun. One among the sharp scholars used to say, ‘There is no flaw in the moon and the sun preventing us from claiming divinity, except that they are bodies which can be subject to absence or presence.’ If one allows for this (condition) to apply to Allah, why wouldn’t they not also claim as such for the divinity of the sun? What would have obliged him to judge by proving another existence that claims to be a god?

Fifth. That Allah the Almighty told us about *al-Khalil* - Ibrāhim, that he objected to the notion of divinity of the celestial bodies, (including) the sun and the moon, by way of his saying: ‘*I do not like things that set*,’ [6: 76]. (Here) there is no meaning for ‘setting’ except the (notion) of presence and absence; so whoever permitted the absence and presence upon Allah the Almighty, he has objected to the proof of *al-Khalil*, Ibrāhim peace be upon him, and thereby stood in contradiction to the reasoning of *al-Khalil*, Ibrāhim, which was validated by Allah.⁴

To respond, I would argue, the first proof as set out by al-Rāzi may face some objections, not so the second and third. Regarding the fourth, despite being related to the second and third, possibly more, it is demonstrative, notwithstanding al-Rāzi putting its classification more towards that which is rhetorical. Further mention of the line of arguments is set out again in *Tafsir al-Rāzi*:

The sixth issue. Al-Ghazāli theorised in some of his books, interpreting the celestial body as being *al-Nafs al-Nāṭiqah al-Haywāniyyah* (the animal rational soul) belonging to each celestial planet; the moon as *al-Nafs al-Nāṭiqah*, which belongs to each sphere, and the sun being *al-*

⁴ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 3, p. 230 (Shamela edition)].

‘Aql al-Majrud (the abstract intellect) governing them. Abu Ali Ibn Sinā’ interpreted the setting (of celestial bodies and entities) as signifying that of *Imkān* (contingency). Al-Ghazālī argued that the setting of these entities demonstrates *Imkān*, interpreting the wording ‘*I do not like things that set*,’ [6: 76] to mean that these are contingent by nature. All beings that are contingent require an effective cause, leading eventually to (recognition of) *Wājib al-Wujud* - the Necessarily Existent.

Know, there is nothing untoward in saying this. But it is remote to interpret the verse in this manner. Among the people there are those who attribute the celestial body/entity to the senses; the moon to the imagination and illusion, and the sun to the mind. In terms of the intended meaning, it is that these three-perceptive faculties are but limited and finite. While the ruler of the universe dominates and has mastery over them, and Allah knows best.⁵

Following this, I would argue that the finite, limited and constricted cannot be *Wājib al-Wujud* - the Necessarily Existent. Hence, it must be contingent, temporal and created – it is impossible for it to be a God. All of this requires closing off all matters which would therefore include the following. Firstly, what exists in the universes of the multiple causes and effect; nature, systems, acts following acts, creation following creation, doesn’t ultimately rest upon an answer to the following question – Who is my Lord? This is because the core question revolves around *who* is *al-Fātir*, namely, who initiated creation. Confirmation of this lays within the command of Allah the Exalted and Majestic. He says in the following verses, indeed too in many others:

فَلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَنَظِّرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَا الْخَلْقُ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنَشِّئُ النَّشَأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
Say, ‘Travel throughout the earth and see how He brings life into being: and He will bring the next life into being. Allah has power over all things.⁶

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعاً وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقَّاً إِنَّهُ يَبْدِأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِدُّهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْفَسْطِيلِ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

It is to Him you shall all return - that is a true promise from Allah. It was He

⁵ *Tafsir al-Rāzī* [Vol. 6, p. 352].

⁶ *Qur’ān*, 29: 21

who created [you] in the first place, and He will do so again, so that He may justly reward those who believe and do good deeds. But the disbelievers will have a drink of scalding water, and agonising torment, because they persistently disbelieved.⁷

فَلْ هُنَّ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَبْدِأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِدُّهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ ثُوَّافِكُونَ
Ask them, ‘Can any of your partner-gods originate creation, then bring it back to life again in the end?’ Say, ‘It is Allah that originates creation, and then brings it back to life, so how can you be misled?’⁸

أَمْ يَبْدِأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِدُّهُ وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَهُ قَوْمٌ هَانُوا بِرَهَانِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
Who is it that creates life and reproduces it? Who is it that gives you provision from the heavens and earth? Is it another god beside Allah?’ Say, ‘Show me your evidence then, if what you say is true.’⁹

اللَّهُ يَبْدِأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِدُّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ
Allah brings creation into being; in the end He will reproduce it and it is to Him you will be recalled.¹⁰

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدِأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِدُّهُ وَهُوَ أَهُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمُثْلُ الْأَعْلَى فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْغَفِيرُ
الْحَكِيمُ

He is the One who originates creation and will do it again - this is even easier for Him. He is above all comparison in the heavens and earth; He is the Almighty, the All Wise.¹¹

Secondly, the universal cosmic proof of the existence of Allah and His Oneness is the correct proof. Third, all upon which Ibrāhīm peace be upon him pondered over were reflections upon the dominion of the heavens and earth, a critical examination of factual matters which at casual glance, would seem to only relate to certain straightforward acknowledgments and beliefs. The statement which Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him made: ‘*I disown all that you*

⁷ *Qur’ān*, 10: 4

⁸ *Qur’ān*, 10: 34

⁹ *Qur’ān*, 27: 64

¹⁰ *Qur’ān*, 30: 11

¹¹ *Qur’ān*, 30: 27

worship beside Allah,’ [6: 78] thus can only mean one of two things – a) I totally disbelieve in your supposed ‘other gods’ denying their existence outright. They are nothing but myths, mental constructs and phantasms with no existence in reality. Or it is b) if some of them do exist outside the realm of imagination, I completely deny their attributed divinity; they don’t possess the qualities which the people claim they do. Hence, *Shirk* then is exclusively to *make another god* alongside Allah, as has been set out quite exhaustively.

Fourth, and without doubt, the *Aṣnām* are with certitude and without dispute *included* in the disavowal of all false gods which Ibrāhim, peace be upon him declared. Moreover, this verse provides a further definitive proof that the *Aṣnām* which were worshipped by Ibrāhim’s people were not just ‘statues made of stones,’ as these existed in front of everyone, no one deny their existence except the insane. So therefore they are nothing except a replacement on behalf of, or acting in the place of those supposed heavenly celestial beings - the stars, the moon, the sun, and similar bodies or entities. There is a possibility that the *Aṣnām* were symbols, tangible objects or dwellings or even instruments of communication with the supposed divine beings that they represented. A full discussion upon the nature of the *Aṣnām* and *Awthān* is set out in the previous volume to this series.

Lastly, to conclude, Allah is *al-Fātir* - the Originator, the Creator and the Initiator. He is the One who initiated all of creation, including the creation of mankind. Thus the debate initiated from the West about the ‘theory of evolution,’ and ‘origin of species’ becomes meaningless. Even if there was basis to the line of argument, it exists only to disprove certain Judeo-Christian myths from the Old Testament. Regretfully, some of those have also crept into Islamic thought over the ages.

4. Addressing doubts and objections about the story of Abraham

Previously we mentioned the glorified statements that He the Exalted and Majestic said in *Surah al-An’ām* [75/79]:

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِيَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلْكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ، فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كُوَكَباً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أَحُبُّ الْأَقْلَيْنِ، فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْفَقَرَ بَارِغَأً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَنِّي لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَا كُوَكَبٌ مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ، فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَارِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرٌ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ، إِنِّي وَجَهْتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّهِيْ فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ خَلِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

In this way We showed Abraham [Allah’s] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be a firm believer. When the night grew dark over him he saw a star and said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it set, he said, ‘I do not like things that set.’ And when he saw the moon rising he said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it too set, he said, ‘If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray.’ Then he saw the sun rising and cried, ‘This is my Lord! This is greater.’ But when the sun set, he said, ‘My people, I disown all that you worship beside Allah I have turned my face as a true believer towards Him who created the heavens and the earth. I am not one of the mushrikeen.

The discourse represented a real and deep contemplation on the part of Ibrāhim, peace be upon him. It wasn’t framed in the context of a debate or argument with his people. That is the definitive trust. Yet there have been many doubts that have arisen concerning this matter. In particular, the most notable of them is the following as raised in the work of al-Shanqīṭi, *Dafu’ Iyām al-Id̄ṭirāb ‘an Ayāt al-Kitāb*:

(i) He the Almighty said: ‘*Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He was upright and devoted to Allah, never an idolater*,’ [3: 67]. This noble verse and similar to it in the Qur’ān indicate that Ibrāhim, peace be upon him and our Prophet, was never a *mushrik*, because of the negation in the past as mentioned in His saying ‘*never an idolater*.’ It proves that the negation is upon all the past tense, as shown by the saying of the Almighty: ‘*Long ago We bestowed right judgement on Abraham and We knew him well*,’ [21: 51]. What is mentioned elsewhere suggests otherwise, which is His saying: ‘*When the night grew dark over him he saw a star and said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it set, he said, ‘I do not like things that set*,’ [6: 76]. (a) Whomsoever thought of lordship residing in other than Allah is a *mushrik*, as proven by the saying of Allah the Almighty about the *kuffār*: ‘*Those who call upon others beside Allah are not really following partner-gods; they are only following assumptions and telling lies*,’ [10: 66].

The answer to this has two aspects. (1) The first of them, meaning that he was debating, not openly acknowledging.¹ His intention was to concede for the sake of argument. Namely, when he said ‘*This is my Lord*,’ he was referring to their false belief. The debater may submit to the false premise in a dialectical manner, in order to refute his opponent, as if Ibrāhim had said to them at the beginning: the star is a created being and it cannot be a god, they would have said to him – ‘you lied, the planet is a god,’ and what proves that he is a debater is the saying of the Almighty: ‘*His people argued with him*,’ [6: 80]. Ibn Jarir (al-Tabari) utilised the verse as being evidence that he was not engaged in a debate, based upon what the Almighty said (of him saying): ‘*If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray*,’ [6: 77]. Yet this isn’t a definitive proof, since Prophets may say such things out of humility, showing their reliance upon Allah. It is similar to the statement of Ibrāhim (where he said): ‘*Preserve me and my offspring from idolatry*,’ [14: 35] and the statement of Ismā’il, ‘*Our Lord, make us devoted to You*,’ [2: 128], as the verses mention.

¹ The reader should note that the marked references (i), (a), (1) and (2) that have been introduced into the translation are not part of al-Shanqīṭī’s original text. In the Arabic edition the Professor re-quotes those areas from this large excerpt during his follow-on analysis. To avoid that unnecessary and often confusing repetition, this has been introduced for ease of perusal.

(2) The second aspect: concerns the discourse as it relates to omission of the interrogative *hamza* (as per) ‘Is this my Lord?’ [هَا إِنَّمَا تَنْهَايْتُكُمْ]. Approval for this has been established in the grammatical sciences that omission of the interrogative *hamza* is acceptable if the context thereby indicates its presence. It is analogous according to al-Akhfash with (the word) ‘or’ [أَوْ] and without it, whether the answer is mentioned or not. By way of an example of it without ‘or’ [أَوْ], nor mentioning the answer can be seen in the line from al-Kumayt:

‘*Bedazzled am I, not by maidens fair;
Nor out of folly, don’t you see my white hair?
And by the home of a mistress I tarry not;
Nor delighted am I by hands of henna, fraught;*’²

Namely, ‘*Or does one with gray hair indulge in play?*’³

Based upon this viewpoint, the interrogative which is omitted, by context shows the lofty status (given to) Ibrāhim, (who is) beyond suspicion of attributing divinity to any other than Allah, together with the testimonial of the Qur’ān showing his innocence from such claims. As per this viewpoint, the verse resembles the reading of Ibn Muḥayṣin ‘*It is the same for them whether you warn them or not*.’ Parallel to this within the same sense is the verse: ‘*If you die, will [the disbelievers] live forever?*’ [21: 34]; and He the Almighty said: ‘*And is it a favour of which you remind me*,’ [26: 22]⁴ upon one of the two viewpoints, ‘*Yet he has not attempted the steep path*,’ [90: 11].

What some scholars have mentioned besides these two interpretations, in any event refers back to them. (An example being) like the view that there is an implied phrase which indicates, ‘*the kuffār say: this is my Lord*.’ (Here) this relates to the first viewpoint. Regarding what was mentioned by Ibn Ishāq and chosen by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, in turn attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās (was) that Ibrāhim was

² Here we have relied upon the rather colourful translation of these stanzas by Muhammad Jaffer, see: <<https://iqraview.com/panegyric/>> accessed 20 Jan-2025. For more about al-Kumayt ibn Zayd al-Asadi [d. 743 CE] one can refer to the journal piece by Gelder: Geert Jan van Gelder (1988), ‘The Most Natural Poem of the Arabs: An Addition to the “Dīwān” of al-Kumayt Ibn Zayd,’ *Journal of Arabic Literature* (Brill), [Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 95-107].

³ At this juncture, al-Shanqīṭī quotes more than half a dozen additional references from a variety of Arab poets to bolster the example already mentioned. Given the already lengthy quotation at hand, these have been omitted from the English translation.

⁴ For this verse, we have departed from Abdel Haleem’s translation and utilised that of Ahmad Shakir.

observing and thinking that the celestial body *might* be his Lord – it is evidently a weak viewpoint. (This is) because the texts of the Qur’ān provide response to it in the following manner, like when He said: ‘*Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He was upright and devoted to God, never an Idolater*,’ [3: 67]; and He the Almighty said: ‘*Then We revealed to you [Muhammad] - Follow the creed of Abraham, a man of pure faith who was not an idolater*,’ [16: 123] and ‘*Long ago We bestowed right judgement on Abraham and We knew him well*,’ [21: 51]. Ibn Kathir though has outlined in his *Tafsir* a rejection of what Ibn Jarir (al-Ṭabarī) mentioned marshalling these verses and others. This is in addition to the saying of the Prophet, peace be upon him: ‘*Each newborn child is born upon fitra*,’ – the *ḥadīth*.⁵

Responses

In response to the above quotation from al-Shanqīṭī, I would argue as follows – with regards to the first viewpoint, highlighted as point (1) above, this is not a convincing line of argument, because the debating opponent could argue ‘Let us assume this is my Lord,’ and ‘Let us assume this is not my Lord,’ thereafter, examining upon which of these does the proof stand. One should note that this is exactly as stated in the text where He the Almighty said:

وَإِنَّا لَأَفْوَى إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَى هُدًى أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

*And most surely we or you are upon right guidance or in manifest error.*⁶

And He the Almighty and Exalted has further said:

فُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرُتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

*Say [Prophet], ‘Have you ever thought, what if this revelation really is from Allah and you still reject it? Who could be more astray than someone who cuts himself off so far [from Allah]?’*⁷

⁵ al-Shanqīṭī, *Dafu’ Iyām al-Id̄irāb ‘an Ayāt al-Kitāb* [p. 16]

⁶ Qur’ān, 34: 24. Again for this verse, we have departed from Abdel Haleem’s translation and utilised that of Ahmad Shakir, albeit slightly modified.

⁷ Qur’ān, 41: 52

فُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرُتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهَدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ فَأَمْنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

‘Say, ‘Have you thought: what if this Qur’ān an really is from Allah and you reject it? What if one of the Children of Israel testifies to its similarity [to earlier scripture] and believes in it, and yet you are too proud to [do the same]? Allah certainly does not guide evildoers.’⁸

A fortiori, it is very well possible, indeed obliged, for the discerning rational observer to say – ‘Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that this is my Lord,’ and then follow on with the consequences of that underlying assumption. Indeed, the context of the verses definitely indicates this, otherwise Ibrāhīm peace be upon him would not have continued to observe the star, then the moon, then the sun, until all of them had set.

With regards to the second point, highlighted as point (2) above, this can also come from the debater and the observer. Thus, from both aspects, it follows that it isn’t necessary ‘that Ibrahim was an observer who believed in the Lordship of the planet.’ Rather, it is very well possible that he was an observer who assumed, for the sake of argument, the Lordship of the planet, and then searched for what would either prove or refute it.

Immediately prior to the highlighted point (1), marked as point (a), note where al-Shanqīṭī mentioned the matter of ‘Lordship residing in other than Allah,’ and quoted the verse at [10: 66]. Here, I would argue that this is quite a grave error as it has been expressed. The truth, as it exists in the knowledge of Allah, is that the ‘partners’ whom the *mushrikeen* invoke have no real existence, either in themselves or in that attributed status, outside the twisted minds of the *mushrikeen*. Given this, it is not that any proof has, or can ever been established for their existence in themselves or in that status at all. The belief of the *mushrikeen* in them, even if it is firm, does not correspond to reality as it exists outside the mind. Instead, it is nothing but mere conjecture, not knowledge. Thus, *zann* (conjecture) in this verse is opposed to ‘Ilm (knowledge) not to certainty or conviction. And as has been repeatedly stated, the nature of *Shirk* is to associate another god with Allah, meaning to believe in divinity in something other than Allah. As for one who merely speculates or doubts, he is not called a *mushrik* per se; rather, he is simply a doubter,

⁸ Qur’ān, 46: 10

wavering in uncertainty. For the sake of argument, even if we were to concede, at least hypothetically, that Ibrāhim was ‘a seeker who assumed the lordship relating to the celestial body,’ it does not necessarily follow that he was a *mushrik* at that time. Thus, the statement made by al-Shanqītī, marked as point (i) at the beginning of the quote, is correct in principle, though not absolute. It could instead carry the meaning that he was never meant to be among the *mushrikeen* who sought omens through the divination of arrows, as falsely claimed by the Quraysh. Rather, he was a monotheist submitting to Allah. Similarly, in other instances, the meaning should be understood according to the context. Despite this, it would seem that al-Shanqītī didn’t grasp or recall to mind what he had previously written in his work entitled *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*:

Firstly, know that the wording of *Mā Kā na* [كَانَ مَا] is one which indicates negation. Sometimes, this negation conveys prohibition and deterrence, as it is in the verse: ‘*The people of Medina and their neighbouring desert Arabs should not have held back from following Allah’s Messenger, nor should they have cared about themselves more than him...*’ [9: 120]. On other occasions, it denotes a matter of impossibility, as per the verse: ‘*Who is better: Allah, or those they set up as partners with Him?*’ [27: 59]. Sometimes it is used to express the matter of divine transcendence, such as in the following verse: ‘*It would not befit Allah to have a child. He is far above that...*’ [19: 35]. This is followed by the phrasing of glory be unto Him, which serves to exalt and declare His purity from having a son or anything unbefitting His absolute perfection and majesty. Hence the phrase [كَانَ مَا] in this context means: ‘*It is neither possible, nor conceivable, nor befitting for Allah, the Almighty, to take a son.*’ Exalted is He, far above such a claim. The verse is, as He the Almighty said similarly: ‘*It does not befit the Lord of Mercy to have offspring,*’ [19: 92].⁹

Even if for the sake of argument, Ibrāhim had believed in the divinity/lordship of the star, and he had reached the age of accountability, he was not among those addressed by a previous Messenger, living in an era where there was a gap between Messengers, and perhaps he did not even know of the existence

⁹ al-Shanqītī *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān* [Vol. 3, p. 419]

of Messengers until revelation came to him and informed him of the previous - and possibly contemporary, Messengers among other nations at the time. As for those who have not reached the age of accountability, they remain upon the original disposition of Islam, the *Fitrah*, and cannot be called *mushrikeen* at all, even if they are legally associated with their *mushrik* parents in worldly rulings.

The commentary of al-Rāzi

Writing in his *Tafsir, Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb*, al-Rāzi says the following:

The Third Issue: Know, that most *mufassireen* have mentioned that the king of that time saw a dream, which was interpreted as foretelling the birth of a boy who would subsequently challenge his rule. As a result, the king ordered that every newborn boy be executed. (When) Ibrāhim’s mother conceived, she concealed the pregnancy from people. With the onset of labour, she departed to a cave in a mountain to give birth, sealing the entrance with a stone. (The angel) Jibreel, peace be upon him, arrived and put his finger in the newborn baby’s mouth, from which he received sustenance. He continued to nurture him while his mother would occasionally visit. Continuing in this state, Ibrāhim remained so until he grew to maturity, and acknowledging he had a Lord. Asking his mother, he said: ‘Who is my Lord?’ She said, ‘I am.’ Thereafter he asked, ‘And who is *your* Lord?’ She replied, ‘Your father.’ He asked his father, ‘Who is your Lord?’ His father replied, ‘The king of the land.’ At this juncture, Ibrahim, peace be upon him, recognised their ignorance of the true Lord. Looking out of the cave, he wanted to discover something that would provide him as a guide to the existence of the Lord. He observed a star, which was the brightest in the (night) sky and remarked, ‘This is my Lord...’ and the story continues from there.

There is a difference in viewpoint for those who hold this position. Some argue it happened after Ibrāhim had reached maturity, becoming legally accountable. Others opined it occurred prior to adulthood. Most have concurred that the first view isn’t correct, marshalling a series of arguments for their position.

The first argument. That the view purporting to hold lordship of the star is considered *kufr* by *ijmā'*. (Moreover) there is *ijmā'* that *kufr* isn't possible for the Prophets.

The second argument. That Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, already recognised his Lord by way of rational evidences prior to this. The evidence upon which this rests, is that prior to these events, He the Almighty provides the context regarding Ibrāhim's dialogue with his father: 'Remember when Abraham said to his father, Azar, 'How can you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray,' [6: 74].

The third argument. That He the Almighty said that he (Ibrāhim) called his father to *Tawheed*, to abandon the worship of idols, with kindness – 'He said to his father, "Father, why do you worship something that can neither hear nor see nor benefit you in any way?"' [19: 42]. It is also said that this call to *Tawheed* and giving up the worship of idols was with sternness. It is well known that a person inviting another to Allah begins with kindness before resorting to sternness and severity. They do not use harshness until the gentler approach has been exhausted. Thus, the incident of the star occurred after Ibrāhim had repeatedly called his father to *Tawheed* in various ways. There is no doubt that he only began inviting his father after first resolving his own understanding of Allah. Hence this episode occurred long after he had already recognised Allah.

The fourth argument. That this episode happened after Allah had showed Ibrāhim the dominions of the heavens and the earth, allowing him to see from above the 'Arsh (throne) and the *Kursi* (footstool) down to what lies beneath the earth. Given Ibrāhim's high rank in *Deen* and deep knowledge of Allah, it is not conceivable that he would ever believe in the divinity/godhood of celestial bodies.¹⁰

Responses

In response to the above, we would argue that prior to enumerating the 'first argument,' the story which al-Rāzi mentions is mythical. It is neither established by revelation, nor narrated as an eyewitness account by any

¹⁰ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 13, p. 39 (*Shamela* edition)]

reliable narrators in *tawātur* fashion – excluding deliberate falsehood or accidental error in transmission. Given this, the story has to be rejected out of hand. It does seem though more likely that al-Rāzi mentioned this to highlight its underlying contradictions, not to marshal it as a core piece of evidence. Further to this, the wording set out by al-Rāzi in 'The first argument,' contains many errors.¹¹ Indeed the viewpoint, that is to say, the belief in the divinity or lordship of the star is *kufr* by *ijmā'*. But Ibrāhim never *actually believed* in the divinity of the star in the first place. The latter portion of what al-Rāzi says is meaningless, given that this was prior to the commissioning of Ibrāhim as a Prophet. Secondly, a Prophet *could* fall from Prophethood and thus disbelieve, meaning he is no longer a Prophet at that time - this is not logically impossible, but Allah must provide definitive, irrefutable evidence to remove any excuse, so that the divine message is not compromised. This is what happened in the story of *Balām ibn Bā'urā*, if it is true that he was a Prophet. He himself declared during his Prophethood, before his fall, that he could not - out of loyalty to his people, confront Musa and his people or pray against them, lest he incur the wrath of Allah. Thus, he spoke the truth while he was still protected, by the infallibility rendered by Allah, and explained how Prophethood and infallibility could end - yet, the wretched criminal still did it!

The argument set out by al-Rāzi in 'The second argument' is also wrong. All that the verse mentions is that he rejected the idea of taking idols as gods, nothing more. As for the existence of 'transcendent celestial gods' or their non-existence, and then the recognition of the one true Lord, this matter is left to investigation and reflection, as is immediately addressed thereafter.

Concerning 'The third argument,' the first portion of this rests upon an abstract claim. In actuality, the context of verses appearing in *Surah Maryam* [v. 41/50] denote that the dialogue came quite late on, a little before the migration of Ibrāhim.¹² Also, there is no language of rebuke within the context of *Surah al-An'am* [ch. 6]. The verse [74] 'you and your people have clearly gone astray,' is a factual report of the reality. As for the sternness of wording, it is not dissimilar to how Musa peace be upon him addressed the Pharaoh:

¹¹ Here, but also in the analysis that follows, the repetition of quotes from the large block quote, which appears in the original Arabic edition, has been omitted entirely.

¹² The verses are quoted in full in the Arabic edition.

لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا أَنْزَلَنَا هُوَ لَاءُ إِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ بَصَارُكَ وَإِنِّي لَأَظْلَكُ يَا فِرْعَوْنَ مُنْتَهِرًا

(He said) ‘You know very well that only the Lord of the heavens and earth could have sent these signs as clear proof. I think that you, Pharaoh, are doomed.¹³

The remainder comment of kindness before resorting to sternness is, yet another, abstract claim. Indeed, this is how Musa peace be upon him was commanded to begin with gentleness. But we don't know what the general rule was concerning other Prophets; Noah's call fluctuated from secret to open, then to secret; and from night and day, Lot's call was in the same pattern of harshness and a softer tone. Finally, regarding ‘*The fourth argument*,’ there are some tall tales here. It is built upon a mythical *hadith* as mentioned earlier. The only utility, which would seem to be what al-Rāzi may have been hinting at, is to demonstrate the contradictions underlying these tales which were circulated by some of the commentators.

More commentary from al-Rāzi

Also, the following appears in the *Tafsir* of al-Rāzi, *Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb*:

The fifth argument: The evidences pertaining to the contingency in the celestial bodies are evident from upward of fifteen-viewpoints. Given these, how can it be deemed fitting for the least of those endowed with reason and understanding to claim the divinity of the planets, let alone the most rational of the rational and the most knowledgeable of the scholars?

The sixth argument. That He the Almighty said regarding the description of Ibrāhim, peace be upon him: ‘*He came to his Lord with a devoted heart*,’ [37: 84]. From the lowest levels of a sound heart is to be free from disbelief; and He also praised him as He said: ‘*Long ago We bestowed right judgement on Abraham and We knew him well*,’ [21: 51]. (Here) meaning, We gave him his guidance before, from the beginning of the time of upbringing, and His saying and that we were knowledgeable of him means of his purity and perfection; and its

¹³ *Qur'ān*, 17: 102

counterpart is the Almighty's saying: ‘*But Allah knows best where to place His messages*,’ [6: 124].

The seventh argument. His saying: ‘*In this way We showed Abraham [God's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be a firm believer*,’ [6: 75] means that he be among those who are certain having been shown this. Then He said thereafter: ‘*When the night grew dark over him he saw a star and said, ‘This is my Lord,’ but when it set, he said, ‘I do not like things that set*,’ [6: 76]. The particle *Fā'* requires order, so it was proven that this incident only occurred after Ibrāhim became one of the people who had attained certainty knowing his Lord.

The eighth argument. This incident only occurred because of the debate between Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, and his people. The evidence for it is that when He the Almighty mentioned this story He said: ‘*Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people—We raise in rank whoever We will; your Lord is all wise, all knowing*,’ [6: 83]. He did not say ‘against himself;’ hence it is evidence this discussion took place with his people in order to guide them to *al-Imān* and *Tawheed*, not because Ibrāhim was seeking *Deen* and knowledge for himself.

The ninth argument. That the people (who) say that Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, only engaged in observing the stars, the moon, and the sun while he was in the cave. This is void because if that were the case, how could he say, ‘*He is only one God, and I disown whatever you join with Him*,’ [6: 19] despite (the fact that) there were neither idols nor people in the cave.

The tenth argument. He the Almighty said: ‘*How can you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me?*’ [6: 80]. (Hence) how can they argue with him while they have not seen him yet and he has not seen them? This indicates that he, peace be upon him, only occupied himself with looking at the stars, the moon, and the sun after he mingled with his people and saw them worshiping idols and they invited him to worship them. Therefore he gave the response with the (following) statement: ‘*I do not like things that set*,’ [6: 76] being (both) a rebuttal to them and to show them to the corruption of their beliefs.

The eleventh argument. That He the Almighty mentioned that he said to his people: ‘*Why should I fear what you associate with Him? Why do you not fear to associate with Him things for which He has sent you no authority?*’ [6: 81]. This indicates that the people had threatened him with their idols, just as it is narrated about the people of Hud, peace be upon him, that they said to him: ‘*All we can say is that one of our gods may have inflicted some harm on you,*’ [11: 54]. Clearly it is known that such a statement wouldn’t be correct if he were residing in a cave.

The twelfth argument. That night was preceded by the day, and there is no doubt that the sun had risen on the previous day and then set, so its previous setting should have been inferred that it was not suitable for (being considered) divinity. And if this evidence invalidates the suitability of the sun for divinity, this is also invalidated it regarding the moon and the star in the first place. This is if we say that the purpose of this episode was for him to attain knowledge for himself. However, if we say that the purpose was to compel and corner his people, then this question does not arise, because it could be said that his dialogue with the people coincided with the rising of that star, and the debate continued until the moon rose, followed by the sun. Under this assumption, the question is irrelevant.¹⁴

Responses

In light of the above, we would argue as follows. Concerning the ‘fifth argument’ that al-Rāzi presented above, it is littered with meaningless exaggeration. Ibrāhim peace be upon him, was truly among the most rational of rational people. He was an individual that was guided who used his intellect to seek knowledge. Thus, he was at the beginning of his quest - it is not necessary that he had already acquired the ‘fifteen viewpoints’ which al-Rāzi mentions to prove the contingency of the celestial spheres, which was a matter already known by al-Rāzi, who lived in an era which was more than three-thousand years after Ibrāhim, during which logical, philosophical, natural, and theological knowledge had greatly evolved and accumulated. And

we know this with certainty in our time, even calculating the ages of the celestial spheres.

In the ‘sixth argument’ set out by al-Rāzi, there is some exaggeration of praise related to Ibrāhim which overall yields quite little. We have made clear in our response to al-Shanqītī that Ibrāhim was never a *mushrik*. The additional comments of al-Rāzi render meaningless judgment, since Allah knows all of the conditions related to Ibrāhim, not just his purity of heart and perfection. And in this context one should consider the wording set out in verses [51/52] of *Surah al-Anbiyya* - ‘*Long ago We bestowed right judgement on Abraham and We knew him well. He said to his father and his people, ‘What are these statues to which you are so devoted?’*’ The strong and most plausible interpretation is that he meant - awareness of his astonishment at his father and his people’s devotion to carved idols.

There is an odd error by al-Rāzi in his ‘seventh argument,’ indicating the dominance of non-Arabic influence on Imām al-Rāzi. This is because the phrase, as per the verse ‘*so that he might be a firm believer,*’ [6: 75] [ولِيَكُونَ [منَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ] - is meant to explain the purpose, not an event that can be chronologically ordered after what precedes it and before what follows it. If this had been Allah’s intent, He would have said, for example ‘*and he became.*’

With regards to the ‘eighth argument’ this contains another grave mistake which arose from extracting texts from the proper context. Consider the verses where He the Exalted says:

His people argued with him, and he said, ‘How can you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me? I do not fear anything you associate with Him: unless my Lord wills [nothing can happen]. My Lord encompasses everything in His knowledge. How can you not take heed?’

Why should I fear what you associate with Him? Why do you not fear to associate with Him things for which He has sent you no authority? Tell me, if you know the answer, which side has more right to feel secure? It is those who have faith, and do not mix their faith with idolatry, who will be secure, and it is they who are rightly guided.’

Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people...¹⁵

¹⁴ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 13, p. 40 (Shamela edition)]

¹⁵ *Qur’ān*, 6: 80/83

This is a new independent statement, following the conclusion of reflection and reasoning, either immediately or after a considerable period of time. It is more likely that Allah chose him as a Prophet and Messenger at that time. Thus, the argument given to Ibrāhim against his people is necessarily his statement set out in the verses above, ‘*How can you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me.*’ It is not the study of the setting of celestial bodies and the proof of the invalidity of their divinity.

Next, the ‘ninth argument’ of Imām al-Rāzi, as well as the tenth and eleventh, are meant to refute the story of the cave and demonstrate its contradictions. Lastly, concerning his ‘twelfth argument,’ the objection raised by al-Rāzi regarding Ibrāhim’s reasoning would have been valid if the hierarchy of deities among his people had been as follows: the Sun, then the Moon, the stars, as it was in al-Rāzi’s mind, according to his logical reasoning. However, historical reality contradicts this, in fact it was - Mars, Jupiter, or even Saturn which were the greatest deities among the Chaldeans; and Jupiter was the greatest among the Greeks and Romans. Therefore, it is no surprise that Ibrāhim began by observing the ‘so-called greatest deity’ among his people first. There is nothing in this detail to suggest that he was reasoning or observing, or engaging in debate and argumentation.

Even more from al-Rāzi

Concluding the matter in his *Tafsir*, al-Rāzi then stated the following:

Thus, with these clear evidences, it is established that it is not permissible to say that Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, said with certainty, ‘*This is my Lord.*’ Since this is invalidated, there remain here two (further) possibilities. The first is that this statement of Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, was made after reaching maturity, but its purpose was not to affirm the divinity of the star. Rather, its purpose related to one of seven matters:

Firstly, that Ibrāhim peace be upon him didn’t say ‘*This is my Lord.*’ as a statement of fact, but rather his intention was to engage in debate with the worshipers of the star. Their belief was that the star was their *Rabb* (lord) and *Ilāh* (god). Therefore, Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, mentioned that statement using their own words and expressions so that he could later refute it. An example of this is when one debates

someone who claims that the universe is eternal and says, ‘The universe is eternal.’ If that is the case, then why do we observe and witness it as something composite and subject to change? Thus, when he mentions ‘The universe is eternal,’ he is merely repeating the opponent’s statement to lead them to an impossible conclusion. Similarly here, Ibrāhim said ‘*This is my Lord,*’ intending to recount the opponent’s claim, and then followed it with what demonstrates its falsity, which is his (follow-on) statement: ‘*I do not like things that set,*’ [6: 76]. This is the intended meaning in the response, and the evidence for it is that the Almighty indicated this debate at the beginning of the verse when He said: ‘*Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people...*’ [6: 83].

The second viewpoint is that his statement, ‘*This is my Lord*’ means ‘This is my Lord according to your assumption and belief.’ An example of this is when a *Muwahid* (an individual monotheist upon *Tawheed*) mockingly says to an anthropomorphist – ‘His god is a limited body,’ meaning according to his assumption and belief. The Almighty said: ‘*Look at your god which you have kept on worshipping...*’ [20: 97]. And He said: ‘*The Day will come when Allah will call them, saying, ‘Where now are those you allege are My partners?’*’ [28: 62]. The Prophet, may the prayers of the Almighty be upon him, would say: ‘*O God of the gods,*’ [أَنْتَ إِلَهُ الْجِنَّاتِ] meaning that Allah is the God of the gods according to their assumption. And He says ‘*Taste this, you powerful, respected man!*’ [44: 49], as per yourself.

The third viewpoint. That the intended (statement) is a question of denial, but the interrogative particle was omitted because the context makes it clear.

The fourth viewpoint. That the statement may be implied, and the intended meaning is: ‘He said they say - This is my Lord.’ The omission of the verb ‘to say’ is common, such as (where) He the Almighty says: ‘*As Abraham and Ishmael built up the foundations of the House [they prayed], ‘Our Lord, accept [this] from us. You are the All Hearing, the All Knowing,*’ [2: 127]. And His saying: ‘*[As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, ‘We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,*’ [39: 3]. In other words, namely ‘What we worship,’ so similarly here, the intended

meaning is that Ibrāhim peace be upon him said to his people, ‘They say, This is my Lord,’ meaning, ‘This is the one who manages and nurtures me.’

The fifth viewpoint. That Ibrāhim mentioned these words by way of mockery, just as it is said of a lowly man who ruled a people, ‘This is your master,’ in a mocking fashion.

The sixth viewpoint. Is that he peace be upon him, intended to refute their claim of the divinity of the stars. However, he knew from their blind adherence to their forefathers and their stubbornness in accepting evidence that if he explicitly called them to Allah the Almighty, they wouldn’t accept it nor pay heed. Therefore, he resorted to a method by which he could gradually lead them to listen to the argument. This was by making a statement that gave the impression of supporting their belief in the divinity of the stars, while his heart, peace be upon him, was firmly grounded in ‘*Imān*. His intention was to enable himself to present evidence to invalidate and refute their belief in order to make them accept his argument. The complete explanation is that when he found no other way to call them except by this method, and he peace be upon him, was commanded to call to Allah. He was in a position similar to one compelled to utter a word of *kufr*. It is known that under compulsion, it is permissible to utter a word of disbelief with the tongue. As He the Almighty said: ‘*With the exception of those who are forced to say they do not believe, although their hearts remain firm in faith,*’ [16: 106].

So if it is permissible to mention the word of *kufr* for the benefit of the survival of one person, then it is permissible to reveal the word of *kufr* in order to salvage a world of rational people from *kufr* and eternal punishment, that would be more appropriate.¹⁶

In a similar vein, Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, spoke these words to appear as though he agreed with the people, so that when he presented them with the evidence refuting their claim, their acceptance of that evidence would be more complete, and their benefit from listening to it would be greater. What strengthens this interpretation is

¹⁶ Here al-Rāzi mentions further examples relating to the matter of compulsion. Given that the digression is not specifically relevant to the story of Ibrāhim, this has been omitted from the translation, notwithstanding that this is already an exceedingly long-quote that is set out.

that the Almighty narrated about him in a similar way in another place, which is where He said: ‘*Then he looked up to the stars. He said, ‘I am sick,’ so [his people] turned away from him and left,*’ [37: 88/90].

This is because they used the knowledge of the stars to (try and) predict future events, so Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, outwardly agreed with them on this method, while inwardly he was free from it. His intention was to use this approach to destroy the idols. If outward agreement was permissible here, even though he was inwardly free from it, then why should it not be permissible in our case as well? Furthermore, the *mutakalimun* have said that it is valid for Allah to manifest extraordinary acts through someone who claims divinity, because the appearance and form of such a claimant indicate his falsehood, and thus no deception arises from the manifestation of those miracles through him. However, it is not permissible for such acts to be manifested through someone who claims Prophethood, as it would lead to deception. Similarly here, his statement, ‘*This is my Lord,*’ does not lead to misguidance, because the evidences of its falsehood is clear. In uttering this statement, there is a great benefit, which is to gradually lead them to accept the evidence. Therefore, it was permissible - and Allah knows best.

The seventh viewpoint. When the people invited him to worship the stars, they were in that debate until the shining star rose, and Ibrāhim peace be upon him said: ‘This is my Lord,’ meaning, ‘This is the Lord to whom you are calling me to.’ Then he remained silent for a while until it has set, then he said: ‘*I do not like things that set,*’ [6: 76]. This completes the explanation of these responses under the first possibility, which is that he, peace be upon him, mentioned this statement after reaching attaining maturity.

With regards to the second possibility, which is that he mentioned it before reaching maturity or when he was close to it, its explanation is that Allah had endowed Ibrāhim with complete intellect and a pure disposition. Thus, before reaching maturity, the idea of proving the existence of the Creator, glorified be He, occurred to him. He reflected and saw the star, so he said: ‘*This is my Lord.*’ Then, when he observed its movement, he said: ‘*I do not like things that set,*’ [6: 76]. Afterward, He the Almighty completed his maturity during this contemplation, and he immediately said: ‘*My people, I disown all that you worship*

beside Allah,’ [6: 78]. This possibility is reasonable, although the first possibility is more deserving of acceptance due to the numerous evidences we have mentioned indicating that this debate took place when Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, was engaged in calling his people to *Tawheed* - and Allah knows best.¹⁷

In response to the above, we would say by way of a conclusion, perhaps the esteemed reader has grown weary and tired of the excessive quoting from al-Rāzi and our lengthy response to the intricacies arising therein. Therefore, let us suffice here by noting that he overlooked a third possibility, which is valid and reasonable. Namely, that this observation and reasoning by Ibrāhim peace be upon him occurred *after* he had reached maturity. Thus, even if Ibrāhim, having reached the age of accountability, momentarily considered the possibility of the star's divinity, without firm belief or certainty, there is no harm in that, especially since he was not among those addressed by a previous Messenger. This is because he undoubtedly came during a period where there was an interruption in the line of Prophethood. Also, it is possible that he was unaware of the existence of any Messengers at all until revelation came to him and informed him of what Allah willed to recount regarding the previous Messengers, but also perhaps contemporary Messengers, if there were any among the other nations. There is no doubt that the story of Ibrāhim peace be upon him, as reflected in the verses quoted throughout this chapter, contains far more knowledge, wisdom, and points of debate and reflection than what we have touched upon with this brief and hurried contemplation. Perhaps we will return to it in other contexts.

¹⁷ *Tafsir al-Rāzi* [Vol. 13, p. 41 (*Shamela* edition)]

Part VIII

Categories and types of Tawheed

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we concluded upon the reality that the nature of Islamic *Tawheed*, is essentially but one simple concept, namely, the testimonial that there is no god but Allah. Here this means the affirmation that all attributes of divinity, *al-Uluhiyyah*, are solely for Allah, the Exalted and Majestic. Coupled with this, is the categorical denial that any aspect of *al-Uluhiyyah* is attributed to anyone or anything except Allah.

However, despite this the foundational myths and ideas of the *mushrikeen* are numerous. They are intertwined, often complex despite being inconsistent and fundamentally contradictory. Given this, scholars may need to provide additional clarification by way of categorising *Tawheed* into different types or sub-divisions in order to address the various forms and guises that *Shirk* may take. Moreover, by doing this, it may help to guide people away from the multitude of overlapping darkness to which *Shirk* is shrouded in, to the single light of *Tawheed*. Accordingly, we may therefore provide a categorisation to *Tawheed* in the following manner:

1. *Tawheed al-Dhātiyyah al-Ilāhiyyah* - [تَوْحِيدُ الذَّاتِيَّةِ الإِلَهِيَّةِ] - Monotheism as it relates to the Divine Essence and Godhood. Some may refer to this as being *Tawheed al-Aniyyah* [تَوْحِيدُ الْأَنِيَّةِ] - ‘Monotheism of Existence.’
2. *Tawheed al-Khāliqiyyah* - [تَوْحِيدُ الْخَالقِيَّةِ] - *Tawheed* as it pertains to the matter of creation. This includes the aspect of creation itself; formation, shaping and bringing this into existence from non-existence.

3. *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah* [توحيد الربوبية] – Monotheism of Lordship Here there are two sub-divisions to this:

- c) *Tawheed al-Mulk wal' Tadbeer wal' Taṣṣaraf al-Takweeni* – [توحيد الملك والتدير والتصريف التكوني] – Monotheism as it pertains to Sovereignty, Management, and Universal Control (or: Cosmic Control)
- d) *Tawheed al-Ḥakimiyyah wal' Tashreeh* [توحيد الحاكمة والتشريع] – Monotheism of Governance and Legislation (which is equivalent to (a) above).

2. Root origin of *Shirk*

In the previous volume of this research we outlined many of the myths surrounding *how* the pre-Islamic Arabs abandoned *Tawheed*, falling into the disaster of idol-worship. More generally though, the notion which permits the idea of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity), being a ‘genus’ or type, with multiple members, is at the very core, the root of *Shirk* within the temporal world. Previously, we have exhaustively argued that the belief that making *al-Uluhiyyah* akin to humanity, namely, viewing this as a general species that has multiple members who reproduce, bear offspring; vary in rank and status (e.g. with one being a leader, the other subordinate; one great, the other small, or one being a king, the other from the commonality; some members free, others being owners) is the belief which has been held by the vast majority of the simple *mushrikeen*. Be that as it existed in ancient Egypt or Greece, or even among the common-folk of India, as well as the *mushrikeen* from among the Arabs.

Attributing offspring to Allah has been a deep-seated chronic disease that has spread among various groups of *mushrikeen*, extending also to the majority of Christians and factions of the Jews. Allah, the Exalted in His Majesty, has utterly refuted this ridiculous claim with various forms of rational and compelling textual evidence. Furthermore, He has without equivocation condemned this in multiple Qur’ānic verses. Allah the Almighty and Sublime, Exalted in His Majesty has said:

وَجَعَلُوا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بَغْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَقَعَدَ عَمَّا يَصْفُونَ، بِدِينِ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيهِ

Yet they made the jinn partners with Allah, though He created them, and without any true knowledge they attribute sons and daughters to Him. Glory be to Him! He is far higher than what they ascribe to Him; the Creator of the heavens and earth! How could He have children when He has no spouse, when He created all things, and has full knowledge of all things?¹

يَا أَهْلَ الْإِنْتَابِ لَا تَقْتُلُوا فِي دِيْنِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ إِنَّمَا الْمُسِيَّخُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ الْفَقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحُ مَنْهُ فَأَمْنَوْا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَالِثَةٌ إِنْتُهُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ؛ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ؛ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكُفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِبِيرًا

People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion, and don't say anything about Allah except the truth: the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was nothing more than a Messenger of Allah, His word, directed to Mary, a spirit from Him.

So believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not speak of a 'Trinity' - stop [this], that is better for you God is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is the best one to trust.²

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلُ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ، مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَى أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Such was Jesus, son of Mary. [This is] a statement of the Truth about which they are in doubt: It would not befit Allah to have a child. He is far above that: when He decrees something, He says only, 'Be,' and it is.³

Condemnation in the Qur'ānic text

In more than twenty-verses of the glorious Qur'ān, this condemnation is clear, concise and utterly irrefutable. Among the verses where this is outlined, are the following:

وَقَالُوا أَتَخْذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا، سُبْحَانَهُ بَنْ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ لَهُ قَاتِنُونَ

They have asserted, 'Allah has a child.' May He be exalted! No! Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, everything devoutly obeys His will.⁴

¹ *Qur'ān*, 6: 100/101

² *Qur'ān*, 4: 171

³ *Qur'ān*, 19: 34/35

⁴ *Qur'ān*, 2: 116

وَقُلْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ، فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الْذِلِّ وَكَبِيرًا
And say, 'Praise belongs to Allah, who has not taken a child nor partner in His rule. He is not so weak as to need a protector. Proclaim His limitless greatness!⁵

قَالُوا أَتَخْذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا، سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا أَنْقُلُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

They say, 'Allah has children!' May He be exalted! He is the Self-Sufficient One; everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. You have no authority to say this. How dare you say things about Allah without any knowledge?⁶

وَيُنَذِّرُ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا أَتَخْذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

It warns those people who assert, 'Allah has offspring.'⁷

وَقَالُوا أَتَخْذَ الرَّحْمَنَ وَلَدًا، لَقَدْ جَنَّمْ شَيْئًا إِذَا، تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتِ يَنْقَطِرُنَّ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخْرُ الجِبَالُ هَذَا، أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنَ وَلَدًا، وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا، إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا أَتَى الرَّحْمَنَ عَبْدًا

The disbelievers say, 'The Lord of Mercy has offspring,' How terrible is this thing you assert; it almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces, that they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy. It does not befit the Lord of Mercy [to have offspring]; there is no one in the heavens or earth who will not come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant.⁸

وَقَالُوا أَتَخْذَ الرَّحْمَنَ وَلَدًا، سُبْحَانَهُ بَنْ عِبَادُ مُرَمُّونَ

And they say, 'The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.' May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants.⁹

مَا أَتَخْذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ، وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَدَهُ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعْلًا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

⁵ *Qur'ān*, 17: 111

⁶ *Qur'ān*, 10: 68

⁷ *Qur'ān*, 18: 4

⁸ *Qur'ān*, 19: 88/93

⁹ *Qur'ān*, 21: 26

*Allah has never had a child. Nor is there 'any god' beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to over-come the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*¹⁰

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ, وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدْرَةً
تَقْبِيرًا

*It is He who has control over the heavens and earth and has no offspring; no one shares control with Him - and who created all things and made them to an exact measure.*¹¹

فَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ خُلْفٌ وَلَدٌ فَإِنَّا أَوَّلُ الْغَابِلِينَ

*Say [Prophet], 'If the Lord of Mercy [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship [them].'*¹²

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَاصْطَفَى مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

*Allah could have chosen any of His creation He willed for offspring, but He is far above this! He is the One, the Almighty.*¹³

This verse, together with those which preceded it, applies generally to anyone who attributes offspring to Allah. Whether that be the Christians who claim that 'Christ is the son of God' and that 'the Holy Spirit proceeded from God,' or the Arab *mushrikeen* who said that 'The angels are the daughters of Allah.' It also applies to the 'philosophers' who spoke of the terms – generation, emanation, or proceeding of intellects and souls from the 'first intellect.' Whether that be all at once, in a gradual fashion, or by way (or not) of an intermediary.

The specific address to the Arab *mushrikeen*

The verses which follow are a specific address to the Arab *mushrikeen*, those who said that the 'angels were the daughters of Allah,' and that their mothers, were from the stock of the nobility of the *Jinn*. As has been set out exhaustively in the previous volume. Note, that Allah the Almighty and

¹⁰ *Qur'ān*, 23: 91

¹¹ *Qur'ān*, 39: 2

¹² *Qur'ān*, 43: 81

¹³ *Qur'ān*, 39: 4

Exalted says:

أَفَأَنْفَاثُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنَّا إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا

*What? Has your Lord favoured you people with sons and taken daughters for Himself from the angels? What a monstrous thing for you to say!*¹⁴

أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ, أَلَا إِنَّمَا مِنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ, وَلَدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

*Did We create the angels as females while they were watching? No indeed! It is one of their lies when they say, 'Allah has begotten.' How they lie!*¹⁵

أَمْ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَنْفَاثٌ بِالْبَنِينَ

*Has He taken daughters for Himself and favoured you with sons?*¹⁶

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَّا أَشَهَدُهُمْ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسَأَلُونَ

*They consider the angels - Allah's servants, to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and they will be questioned about it.*¹⁷

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسِبًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ

*They claim that He has kinship with the jinn, yet the jinn themselves know that they will be brought before Him.*¹⁸

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَى جُدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

*And that He, Exalted be the glory of our Lord! Has neither spouse nor child.*¹⁹

One should seriously ponder over the import of these blessed verses. Indeed, isn't it remarkable that Imām Ibn Taymiyyah rarely cites these verses in his supposed 'comprehensive' survey to establish the confused ill-disciplined tripartite division of *Tawheed*, namely: *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawheed al-Asmā' wa 'l-Šifāt*. Were these verses missing from

¹⁴ *Qur'ān*, 17: 40

¹⁵ *Qur'ān*, 37: 150/152

¹⁶ *Qur'ān*, 43: 16

¹⁷ *Qur'ān*, 43: 19

¹⁸ *Qur'ān*, 37: 158

¹⁹ *Qur'ān*, 72: 3

his copy of the Qur'ān? Surely not!

For the Arabs of the north the Adnanite Arabs, particularly the tribe of the Quraysh, they had several false deities, most of whom were feminine. These included al-Lāt, al-'Uzza and al-Manāt, as well as others. As previously explained, they had believed these supposed 'deities' to be angels, the angels being 'the daughters of Allah.' They may have even believed in some form of kindship or marriage relationship between Allah and the *Jinn*. Allah is far Exalted above the falsity of their absurd claims. However, given their historical connection to the *Tawheed* of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, they did believe in what they viewed as a 'central supreme God,' Allah, the Exalted. Hence they gave the attribution for most of creation and management of the universe to Allah, as they considered Him 'the chief of the gods,' or akin to the leader of the 'tribe of the gods,' with Him as the ultimate father. Alternatively, they may have viewed Him too as being the most capable of the plethora of 'gods' or even the one who held the most noble of attributes, as is shown from the Qur'ānic record of debates with them, that utterly demolished their false contradictory beliefs.

In that respect, they are similar to the *mushrikeen* who have existed in various parts of the world. The exception here, is their belief that Allah, the central and supreme deity, was viewed as 'chief and greatest of gods,' thereby holding a higher status as compared to other societies born of *Shirk*. Indeed we have argued that they attribute *most* of creation and the management of the universe to Allah the Exalted, but critically, *not all of it*. Nor did they attribute *exclusive* control to Allah the Exalted as we have definitively proven in this present work with irrefutable evidence.

Hasty, incomplete, ill-conceived, with a failure to consider all necessary texts, reports and narratives, the tripartite definition stemming from Imām Ibn Taymiyyah has caused countless problems. This blindness of insight also bedevilled those who followed Ibn Taymiyyah in his stead, namely, the renegade and rebel, the *Kharījī* Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW). They made a cataclysmic blunder in believing that the *mushrikeen* acknowledged what Ibn Taymiyyah mis-defined as *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*. That was further compounded by the error in arguing that the *Shirk* of the *mushrikeen* solely lay within the domain of what they termed *Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*. Errors such as this are grave, indeed abhorrent, representing a

serious and monumental mistake that has led to enormous confusion and the formation of the tripartite definition for which Allah has revealed no authority.

Notwithstanding this, it has also caused disruption in the concept of *al-Uluhiyyah*, the matter for which creation itself was brought into existence, distorting the very concept of *Tawheed*, presenting it as a mutilated, disfigured and unstable version. Befogging the minds of its adherents is focus upon a collection of secondary matters, some of which would be oddly unassuming if they weren't so tragic. Discussions abound concerning matters of 'seeking intercession,' whether 'the dead can hear the living.' Others are borne of outright fanaticism like the obsession over graves, trees, 'sacred sites,' 'relics,' and the like. Other terrifying consequences stem from this, the worst of which is levelling the accusation upon the majority of Muslims, the people who face the *Qibla*, accusing them of *Shirk* and *Kufr* – stating that they are, for all intents and purposes, outside of the fold of Islam. With that justification, they have wielded the sword against Muslims, justifying their execution with the utmost brutality, devoid of any mercy or even compassion. That in itself is an act of *Kufr*, as per the *hadīth* of 'Reviling a Muslim is a sin, fighting him is *Kufr*.' Most of this we have delineated, the remainder will be outlined in due course.

Removing this gross and erroneous understandings has been the major prompt for the research and writing of this present series of books. We ask Allah for success - there is no 'other god' except Him; in Him we trust and by His support and mercy, we are supported.

3. Tawheed relating to the Divine Entity

Tawheed al-Dhāt [تَوْحِيدُ الْذَّاتِ] – ‘Monotheism or Oneness of the Divine Essence,’ constitutes the foremost and most fundamental category of *Tawheed*. It is the firm belief that Allah, Exalted and Glorified, is uniquely necessary in His existence - *Wājib al-Wujūd*, entirely self-sufficient by virtue of His essence - *Ghanī bi-Dhātihi*. He is the *al-Awwal* (the First) and *al-Ākhir* (the Last); *al-Ζāhir* (the Manifest), and *al-Bātin* (the Hidden). He alone is the First, with nothing preceding Him - pre-eternal, ancient, and existing without beginning, preceding all times and eras. He is also the Last, with nothing following Him – everlasting, enduring forever without end.

He did not originate from anything, nor does anything originate from Him. He is not a member of a species or genus, for there is no such thing as a ‘divine species or genus,’ let alone any concept of a ‘race of gods.’ He is a unique divine being, singular in His essence. He is *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living), *al-Qayyūm* (the Self-Sustaining Sustainer of all existence), and He is *al-Haqq al-Mubīn* (the Absolute Truth). He is omnipotent, meaning He is capable of all things; omniscient, meaning His knowledge encompasses all things. He knows what has been, what is, what can potentially be, and what will not be but, if it were to exist, how it would unfold. He is the Doer of what He wills, acting as He pleases, freely choosing by an absolute will that is unrestricted by any limitation or condition, except those which He has imposed upon Himself or stipulated upon Himself.

He is the Creator of all things, who has measured and decreed their realities *fa-qaddarahu taqdīran* - in precise proportions. He is *Rabb* - the Lord and Master of all things and their *Malīk*, final sovereign. He is *al-Sayyid al-*

Muṭlaq - the Absolute Master, exercising command and governance over all creation with His orders and prohibitions.

He is described by every attribute of perfection, beauty and majesty. There is no Lord besides Him, nor any deity worthy of worship other than Him. All of this is an established truth in its essence, requiring unequivocal belief with absolute certainty, free from any doubt. However, mere conviction alone is not sufficient. It is also necessary to affirm this truth verbally, to articulate this affirmation, and to submit oneself in acknowledgment and surrender. This submission and acknowledgment must be done not only because it is intrinsically true, and by Allah, it certainly is, but also as an act of devotion and drawing closer to Allah.

Indeed, it is obligatory to combine these aspects: to affirm, to articulate this affirmation, and to adhere to its implications as acts of worship and devotion to Allah. This transforms certainty from being a mere intellectual or philosophical conviction, an acknowledgment of theoretical truths or abstract philosophical propositions with no direct connection to religion or spirituality, and of no value in the Hereafter, into *Imān Sharī’ī*, religious, legitimate faith. Such *Imān* constitutes ‘*Ibādah* entailing specific obligations and practices defined by the creed itself. This ‘religious faith’ is the desired goal. It gives human existence its meaning, and beyond that, it serves as the path to salvation in the Hereafter. Without it, existence becomes meaningless, an empty life culminating in a fall into the abyss, as described in the Qur’ān:

وَمَا أَذْرَكَ مَا هِيَةٌ، نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

*What will explain to you what that is? A blazing fire.*¹

All of this is established as a necessity through clear and definitive rational and innate proofs, even before the advent of revelation. We previously touched upon a small portion of these proofs, demonstrating that this matter is rational and evidentiary, beyond doubt. The *Shari’ah* subsequently arrived to confirm, remind, and elucidate these truths, transforming them from mere affirmations of reality - philosophical, rational, or logical necessities into ‘*Aqā’id sharīyyah* (religious doctrines) that serve as acts of devotion to Allah,

¹ *Qur’ān*, 101: 10/11

expressed through belief and action in accordance with them. This is exemplified in the divine clarification found in verses such as:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ كُفُواً أَحَدٌ

*Say, 'He is Allah the One. Allah the eternal He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'*²

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيهِ

*He is the First and the Last; the Outer and the Inner; He has knowledge of all things.*³

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ

*Allah, there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful.*⁴

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكَتْبِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

*O you who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Scripture He sent down to His Messenger, as well as what He sent down before. Anyone who does not believe in Allah, His angels, His Scriptures, His messengers, and the Last Day has gone far, far astray.*⁵

All forms of *Tawheed* ultimately derive from this foundational principle. The classification of its aspects into distinct categories is not due to any essential separation but is rather a practical method for facilitating its study and addressing the various distinct forms of *Shirk* that manifest opposing each category. This categorisation, which forms the primary subject of this chapter, does not arise from an imagined division, undefined terminologies, or abstract claims devoid of precision or evidence. Rather, it is grounded in two key sources, namely a comprehensive inductive study of the verses of the Qur'ān, supported by rigorously authenticated texts from the Prophetic *Sunnah*. Secondly, a thorough and critical examination of the beliefs of the pre-Islamic Arabs, as well as the creeds and religions of other nations and peoples -

² Qur'ān, 112: 1/4

³ Qur'ān, 57: 3

⁴ Qur'ān, 3: 2

⁵ Qur'ān, 4: 136

particularly those during the period when the Qur'ān was revealed, as it addressed and engaged with them. This has been detailed earlier and will be elaborated upon further in the remaining sections of this treatise to an exhaustive degree.

Tawheed al-Dhāt – *Tawheed* as it relates to the Divine Essence, corresponds to what Ibn Baṭṭah al-‘Akbarī referred to as ‘*al-Dhātiyyah*,’ or ‘*al-Iniyyah*,’ (selfhood or being). This terminology was mischaracterised by the Wahhābi sect, who alleged that Ibn Baṭṭah prefigured Ibn Taymiyyah in the latter’s contentious and, as they claim, misguided tripartite division of *Tawheed*. According to this understanding, the *Ilāh* [الإله], god/deity under discussion is *Wājib al-Wujūd* – the Necessary Being, is self-sustaining, singular, and unique. He is not a member of any type or genus, as no element, substance, matter or divine type or category exists alongside Him. He is One; singular and indivisible, the Absolute Self-Sufficient. He is characterised by the attributes previously mentioned.

However, in Ibn Baṭṭah al-‘Akbarī’s tripartite classification of *al-Imān*, which is distinct from *Tawheed* and must not be conflated, he included *al-Khāliqiyyah* (creatorship) within *al-Iniyyah* (selfhood/being). This inclusion was based on two points, namely that creatorship is one of the most distinctive characteristics of *al-Uluhiyyah* (divinity). Second, Ibn Baṭṭah did not account for the existence of polytheistic beliefs that attribute offspring to Allah - sons and daughters derived from a supposed ‘divine substance’ or essence, who nonetheless, lack independent creatorship.

Forms of Shirk Contradicting this Category of Tawheed

This aspect of *Tawheed* is contradicted by various forms of doctrinal *Shirk*. Perhaps the most obvious, is the belief in the multiplicity of divine essences in different traditions, whether in abstract philosophical systems or simplistic folk beliefs. Examples include the claim of certain philosophers regarding the eternity of multiple entities, such as Aristotle’s assertion of the co-eternity of the universe alongside Allah, or the idea upheld by others that unformed primordial matter is eternal. This constitutes *Shirk fī al-Dhāt* - *Shirk* in essence, as they posit alongside Allah other eternal, self-sufficient entities that are necessary in their existence and are not created by Allah, Most Exalted. Despite their claim that Allah alone is: *al-Ilāh al-Mustahiq lil-‘Ibādah* - ‘the

deity worthy (or deserving) of worship,’ they simultaneously uphold *Shirk* in essence while professing *Tawheed* in worship. To our knowledge, however, none among them ever claimed that primordial matter is itself worthy or deserving of worship.

In truth, their claim that they are monotheists, or that they practice monotheism in worship, is false. Attributes such as pre-eternity, Necessary Existence, or primordiality, regardless of the terminology used, are exclusive to Allah. These qualities necessarily follow from His being the true deity, uniquely distinguished as the originator of creation. Therefore, attributing pre-eternity to a being *other* than Allah effectively ascribes an essential characteristic of divinity to that being. This amounts to making that being a deity alongside Allah, or in other terms, setting it up as a ‘*nidd*’ (rival) to Allah; this, precisely, is *Shirk*.

Moreover, the worship of Allah cannot coexist with *Shirk* in any form, as has been definitively demonstrated earlier. How then, can it be claimed that there is such a thing as *Tawheed fil 'Ibādah* [تَوْحِيدُ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ] ‘monotheism in worship’ while *Shirk* is present? Far be it from Allah! Such a claim is an exposed sophistry that deceives only those ensnared by the false Wahhābi definition of ‘*Ibādah*. As you can see, this is a complex philosophical argument whose invalidity is manifest, as explained in detail in other chapters of this present work. There is but one Necessary Existence; He is singular and without addition or subtraction.

The belief in two eternal deities

The doctrine that posits the existence of two eternal and pre-existent deities, one being the ‘god of good’ identified with light or Allah, and the other ‘the god of evil,’ identified with darkness or Satan, as maintained by certain dualistic sects among the Magians. Evidently this constitutes *Shirk* in the divine essence. Some adherents of this viewpoint limit worship and love to ‘the god of good,’ professing hatred and enmity toward the ‘god of evil,’ denying and disbelieving in him. Others may restrict love to ‘the god of good,’ while offering worship to both: they worship and love ‘the god of good’ but also worship ‘the god of evil,’ by submitting to him, bowing in humility and obedience to avert his harm and wrath, despite their hatred and detestation of him. This, as can be observed, is a philosophical position, yet it is grasped

and adhered to by many among the common folk of these groups. The falsity of this doctrine is beyond doubt, disproved by the aforementioned definitive arguments and others besides. The subject is vast and would require dedicated works and comprehensive research to fully address.

The belief in divinity as a genus

The notion that divinity, like humanity, constitutes a genus with multiple individual members, who may reproduce and propagate their kind. Within this framework, the ranks and statuses of these deities vary: some are rulers, while others are subordinates; some are great, while others are lesser; some are kings, while others are enslaved, all being analogous to the hierarchy found within human societies. For these adherents, neither pre-eternity nor self-sufficiency is a necessary attribute of divinity. The ‘deities’ are believed to emerge and be born after previously being non-existent, and it is not implausible in their view that these deities might also perish. Furthermore, perfection or freedom from deficiency is not considered a requisite attribute of a deity in this belief system. Indeed, some deities are attributed with disgraceful and scandalous traits, such as fornication, theft, and other immoral acts, to a greater extent than others! This belief reflects the creed of the majority of simple-minded *mushrikeen*, including the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, most Arab *mushrikeen*, and the common people of India. It forms the essence of much of the world’s *Shirk*. Among these groups, it is generally acceptable to believe that gods and humans may intermarry, producing demigods or giants, just as gods may intermarry with *jinn* to produce angels. Such beliefs are rife with absurdities and disgraces!

Differentiation among ‘the gods’

These purported ‘deities’ are also believed to differ in their powers and specialisations. For instance, one god may be responsible for the sun, another for war, a third for the sea, while others govern love, hunting, death, or annihilation. Some gods are said to cause plants to grow, others protect merchants, and still others are even assigned the role of patron deity of thieves. Such beliefs, filled with contradictions and obscenities, are inherently fallacious and devoid of coherence or credibility. It is therefore not surprising to hear one of the Arab *mushrikeen* proclaim:

لَبِيكُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ، إِلَّا شَرِيكًا هُوَ لَكَ، نَمْلَكُهُ وَمَا مَلِكَ

‘Here I am, no partner do You have, except a partner that belongs to You; You own him and all that he owns.’

Such a statement reflects *their belief* in the existence of ‘other deities’ who are, in some sense, partners with Allah, even if they occupy the status of subjugated servants, lower down in the hierarchy or pecking order of ‘the gods.’ These deities, according to their belief, belong to the type, category, or clan of divinities. This statement does not imply, as some have misunderstood, that these so-called ‘partners’ are merely created, subservient beings who are in no way part of the genus of divinity. Some interpreters, failing to contextualise this statement alongside other corroborative texts and historical accounts, erroneously concluded that the phrase ‘You own him and all that he owns,’ indicates an acknowledgment that such a ‘partner’ is not divine but a created, subjugated being who holds no power over life, death, or resurrection. It is entirely plausible that such a partner could be nothing more than a dead entity, buried beneath an elaborately constructed shrine or dome. Yet despite this, such figures were worshipped by these people and deemed partners with Allah. How far the misguided imaginations of the extreme Wahhābi faction have strayed in their interpretation of such matters!

The truth is that the phrase ‘except a partner that belongs to You; You own him and all that he owns,’ in itself does not definitively indicate that the worshippers considered the partner to be of a fundamentally different nature or genus from the divine owner. The phrase does not establish that these *mushrikeen* believed the *Mālik* (owner) to be Allah, Lord, and Master, while the *Mamluk* (owned) was, by necessity, a created and subjugated servant who held no power over life, death, or resurrection. This matter will be addressed exhaustively in the next chapter. Those who claim, as Ibn Taymiyyah’s imitators generally do, that this interpretation reflects the definitive and exclusive intent of the Arab *mushrikeen*, are undoubtedly following conjecture and fabricating lies. Such claims contradict well-established historical evidence and the unequivocal Qur’ānic proofs previously outlined. Moreover, their assertion contradicts the very words of the statement in question, which explicitly says: ‘except a partner that belongs to You.’ This is a clear admission that the entity invoked is indeed considered *a partner to*

Allah in some sense or capacity. It is astonishing that some would use this statement to justify their falsehoods, analysing its terms as though it were divine scripture. They do so despite knowing that these *mushrikeen* occupied the lowest depths of thought, with trivial minds, superficial understanding, and a complete lack of intellectual rigor. How, then, can such ambiguous phrases, vague terms, and shallow reasoning become authoritative evidence? How can the clear and unequivocal signs of Allah, which we have studied comprehensively in the previous volume of this series, be neglected in favour of such baseless arguments? How can time and effort be squandered debating the intent behind such a trifling and absurd statement from the Arab *mushrikeen*!

The belief in the multiplicity of hypostases within a single essence

This doctrine represents a series of convoluted and contradictory claims, espoused primarily by certain speculative philosophers and others inclined toward obtuse reasoning. These individuals attempt to reconcile the *Tawheed al-Dhāt* with the *Shirk* into which they have fallen. Instead of abandoning *Shirk* entirely and returning to pure monotheism, they have devised some of the most untenable and contradictory assertions, reducing unity to multiplicity and multiplicity to unity. Such claims are in direct conflict with the necessities and axioms of reason. Worse still, they attribute to Allah, Glorified and Exalted, what even human beings would deem a form of mental illness or psychological disorder, such as schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder. Examples of this include, most obviously, the Christian Trinity. This refers to the claim that ‘God is three distinct deities,’ the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, referred to as ‘three hypostases’ or ‘three persons’ within a single essence. According to this doctrine, God is ‘one in three’ and ‘three in one.’ This paradox has perplexed even the most astute of their theologians and dialecticians, who ultimately resort to declaring ‘the Blessed Trinity’ as a divine mystery beyond human comprehension, understanding, or rationalisation, insisting that one must simply believe and submit without inquiry.⁶

⁶ An example, amongst a great many who have espoused this, can be the ‘leap of faith,’ (or the ‘qualitative leap’) formulated and expressed by the nineteenth century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard.

It is important to clarify that our reference to ‘schizophrenia’ here is not intended as an insult or mockery. Rather, it was employed by a philosopher and university professor as an illustrative analogy to explain the concept of the Trinity or the dilemma of two natures and wills coexisting within the person of Christ, as a means of simplifying this notion for readers. Such an explanation, however, is fraught with its own theological and logical difficulties.

The ‘Brahmanic Trinity’

Prevalent among the Brahmins, this belief holds that the one God has three faces: ‘Brahma,’ the creator and originator; ‘Vishnu,’ the sustainer, provider, and god of goodness and mercy; and ‘Shiva’ (also known as ‘Mahesh’), the destroyer and god of death and destruction. However, their doctrines are riddled with inconsistencies and ambiguities, leaving it unclear whether these three are merely faces of a single essence, or independent entities that have emerged from one another. The lack of clarity further complicates the coherence of their theological claims. Another example is the belief of certain dualists in a ‘creative cosmic force’ with two sides – one being a benevolent, luminous side and a malevolent, dark side. They assert a concept of ‘one in two and two in one,’ attempting to merge duality within unity. This notion has been systematically propagated through what appears to be an organised effort by certain film production houses and directors, who aim to popularise such myths by cloaking them in emotional narratives and embedding them within broader cosmological frameworks. An example of this can be seen in the *Star Wars* series. Exalted is Allah far above what the wrongdoers claim in such fabrications!

A related idea is the viewpoint, ‘God and Satan are two faces of the same coin,’ which has been attributed to Dr. Turki al-Hammād, a figure closely aligned with the ruling elite of Saudi, the oppressive clique holding grip of the supposed ‘land of Tawheed.’ This state, which claims to champion *Tawheed* and support truth and its adherents, paradoxically nurtures such contradictions. Even its former grand mufti, ‘Abd al-Aziz ibn Bāz, has been accused of articulating similarly problematic positions.

Forms of transformation

Here, this relates to the viewpoint of the supposed transformation of a non-divine being into a deity through the indwelling or union of a Divine Essence. Its central position is that a non-divine entity *can become* a deity by *Hulool* – incarnation (or even indwelling) of a divine essence within it, or through *Ittihād* – its union with the divine. As a result, new divine beings are believed to emerge, which did not previously exist. Several examples of this can be made here. The belief held by a minority of heretical Sufis, considered *kuffār* among the Islamic tradition, regarding the Prophet Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him and his family, or concerning some of their so-called *aghwāt* – ‘helpers,’ and *aqṭāb* – ‘spiritual poles.’ They claim that the divine essence indwells or unites with these figures, elevating them to the status of deities. Perhaps most well known in this regard is the belief of the majority of Christians regarding Jesus, the son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother. According to their doctrine, God, or more precisely, the ‘hypostasis’ of the Son, also referred to as the ‘Word’ – incarnated or indwelled within the human body of Jesus. This fusion is said to have produced the figure of ‘Jesus Christ’ who is human in his composition of flesh and blood (as Jesus) and simultaneously divine as the ‘heavenly’ Christ.

There is also the belief of a small, now-extinct Christian sect regarding Mary peace and blessings be upon her and her son, who claimed that the divine essence indwelled within her, rendering her divine. The majority of Christians, however, reject this outright and deny the divinity of Mary, while still bestowing upon her the title ‘Mother of God’ such a contradiction is difficult to reconcile. We established in the previous volume definitive proofs of the impossibility of Allah ever taking a son, under any circumstance. The utmost that can occur is that Allah may ‘choose’ from among His creations whomever He wills for a special status of selection – *istiṣfā*, and nothing beyond this. This special selection, which some may metaphorically refer to as ‘adoption,’ is the only possible scenario. Anything beyond it is absolutely impossible and inconceivable.

The idea of ‘biological offspring’ is impossible. Just as the adoption of another divine being to become an adopted son is also impossible, as there exists only one divine being, without any addition or subtraction, Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. The adoption of a created being in a manner that transforms the creature into a divine entity is a far-fetched and wild fantasy, which is likewise impossible. The ‘motherhood’ of Mary, whether attributed to Allah,

Exalted is He, or to the Messiah, is logically impossible under any condition, due to the necessary correlation between ‘sonship’ and ‘motherhood.’ Such a claim could only be metaphorical if they were to assert that Mary gave birth solely to the human Jesus, who later became the Messiah, possibly at the point when John baptized him, through the indwelling of the hypostasis of the Son or its union with him.

Ascent

Here this is the viewpoint that relates to the transformation of a non-divine being into a Deity through ‘ascent,’ regardless of the mechanism to achieve this ‘ascent.’ Consider the following remarkable example - the Indian Purāṇas (which are later texts compared to the Vedas) narrate a story with the following meaning. There was a sage named Durvāsas, known for his extraordinary powers, which he had attained through yoga and self-discipline. On one occasion, the sage travelled to the ‘realm of the gods,’ bringing with him a garland of exquisitely fragrant flowers as a gift for Indra, the lord of the heavens. However, Indra carelessly hung the garland on the tusk of his elephant, showing no admiration for or appreciation of the sage’s gift. This deeply offended Durvāsas, who was known for his extreme sensitivity, and in his anger, he cursed Indra and all the gods. As a result, the gods gradually weakened, their powers diminished, and they eventually lost control over the three worlds. Their rivals, the demons, seized the opportunity to extend their dominion over the realms. The gods, helpless in their plight, observed the unfolding changes as the demons solidified their oppressive rule over all living creatures. Seeking a solution, the gods approached Brahma for advice. Brahma directed them to Vishnu. And the tale goes on.

In this account, it is evident that the sage Durvāsas could enter the realm of the gods and was capable of issuing a curse upon the gods that had a tangible and destructive effect. Thus, he was a *nidd* – rival to them in this regard, and perhaps even superior. By this definition, he qualifies as a ‘deity’ according to the framework outlined in this discussion. There is also another account which is narrated regarding a demoness. That demoness, Mahishī was transformed by the gods into the form of a buffalo. Immersing herself in rigorous ascetic practices and severe acts of devotion, she compelled Brahma to grant her a boon that she would be invulnerable to death, except at the hands

of a being born of Vishnu and Shiva, a condition she knew was impossible, as both were of the same nature and could not procreate. Brahma, bound by the power of her asceticism, was forced to fulfil her request. Mahishī then executed her plan of vengeance, rallying the demons under her banner, defeating the gods, and establishing her dominion over the world. The gods turned to the great deity Vishnu and the great deity Shiva for help in overcoming Mahishī. However, both Vishnu and Shiva confessed their inability to counter the mighty demoness and her forces, though they did not hide their simmering rage. From the eruption of their shared, volcanic fury emerged the goddess Durga, who was ‘born’ to take on the task of waging war against Mahishī. As the embodiment of the combined wrath of the two great deities, and possibly other gods who were present, and being born in accordance with the condition imposed by Brahma, Durga was able to slay thousands of demons and eventually engage Mahishī in a series of battles and duels, the details of which are extensive. From this narrative, it is evident that Mahishī had defeated the gods and that even the great deities Vishnu and Shiva were powerless to stop her. As such, Mahishī stands as a *rival* to them, qualifying, according to the framework of this discussion, as a ‘deity’ by definition.

The mechanism of *al-Irtiqā*’ (ascent) in the story of the sage Durvāsas lies in devotion, self-discipline, and rigorous practices, particularly through yogic exercises. Here, *al-Uluhiyyah*, divinity, is seen as something attainable, achieved by those who exert themselves in striving to reach it. This concept is intelligible only by imagining an infinite and mysterious magical force that permeates all things and can be tapped into through the appropriate means. Among these means are specific chants and incantations, magical symbols, and inscriptions.

It is conceivable that this infinite, mysterious magical force represents all that remains of the supreme central deity, that is, Allah - or, as they call it, Brahman (not to be confused with Brahmā, so take note). Brahman, according to their belief, is the greatest deity, beyond description and understanding, long forgotten after millennia of *Shirk*, sorcery, and superstition. All of these beliefs, however, are inherently false, without any real existence beyond the distorted imaginations and superstitious minds of their adherents. Definitive, rational proofs affirm that the *Wajib al-Wujūd* – the Necessary Being is singular, with no addition or subtraction. There is no genus, type, nation, or

tribe of Necessary Beings with multiple members. Rather, He is one, singular, unique, and indivisible, as previously demonstrated when discussing the proofs of *Tawheed*.

4. The Reality of the pagan Arab *Talbiyyah*

What is the reality of the pagan Arab *Talbiyyah*? Previously we have argued that it isn't a great surprise that the Arab *mushrikeen* held the following wording in the *Talbiyyah* (invocation):

لَيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ، إِلَّا شَرِيكًا هُوَ لَكَ، تَمْلَكَهُ وَمَا مَلِكَ

‘At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours,
You own him and what he owns.’

Ultimately their chronic disease was that of likening divinity to that of humanity. They likened Allah to His creation. Coupled with their belief in ‘other gods,’ drawn from a divine element, lineage or nature, even if they were in the position of lower or lesser ‘gods’ or servants. It isn’t a surprise that this was a thing among the Arabs for two-reasons. Firstly, ‘*al-Raqeeq al-Mamluk*’ the owned slave. Just as the ‘owned slave’ is a human and his master who owns him is also a human. Especially for those who believe that the ‘nature of divinity’ exists in two types or genus: the tribe of Allah, being the tribe of good, light and the tribe of *Iblees* – which is that of evil and darkness. Between them rage endless wars and battles, including enslavement. Some of these legends have been mentioned elsewhere in this work.

Secondly, concerns that of children, sons and daughters. More specifically, daughters, given the custom of the *mushrikeen* among the Arabs and more generally, is that the father *owns the child*, and by extension, owns their wealth and property. Rights that are given to the father are far sweeping, he has the right to sell them, and even to kill them. This was a widely accepted

custom in China until recently, and many primitive *mushrik* tribes in Africa still follow this practice. A man ‘purchases’ a spouse from her father together with several cattle.

One can even find some traces of this in previous divine laws - Moses’ father-in-law gave him his daughter in marriage on the condition that he provided labour to him for eight-years; a significant price, perhaps equivalent to a thousand gold dinars, comparable to the prices of the finest enslaved individuals. It wasn’t a dowry per se, nor an exclusive gift for the woman, but rather a *payment* to her father. Traces of this exist in Judaism. Customary to the Arabs before the dawn of Islam, it should therefore be self-evident and abundantly clear. It was even part of early Islamic law, which was gradually abrogated, and many instances bear witness to it. Examples abound, but notable are: a) the practice of female infanticide, a practice often at times glorified; b) the vow made by ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib to sacrifice his tenth son if he was blessed with having ten – a well-known, infamous story.¹

Next, as expressed by the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him as ‘*You and your wealth belong to your father*,’ which was recorded in the *Sunan* of Imām Ibn Mājah:

حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ عَمَّارٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْيَسَ بْنُ يُوشَّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يُوسُفُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ الْمُنْكَرِ عَنْ جَابِرٍ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي مَالًا وَوَلَدًا وَإِنَّ أَبِي يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَجْنَاحَ مَالِي فَقَالَ أَنْتَ وَمَالُكٌ لِّا يَبْقَى

Hishām ibn ‘Aāmir narrated to us he said Esa ibn Yunus narrated to us he said Yusuf ibn Ishāq narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Munkadir from Jābir ibn Abdullah, that a man said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I have wealth and a son, and my father wants to take all my wealth.’ He replied: ‘*You and your wealth belong to your father*.’²

It also appears in *al-Mu’jam al-Awsat* by al-Tabarāni. Commenting after citation, he said: ‘This *ḥadīth* is not seen (narrated) from Yunus except by Esa

¹ Several accounts for this can be consulted, for example: Ibn Kathir (2006), *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad*, Translated by Professor Trevor Le Gassick Centre for the Muslim Contribution to Civilization (Garnet Publishing: Reading) [Vol. 1, pp. 125/126]; *History of al-Tabari*, (1988), Translated by W. Montgomery Watt and M V MacDonald, (State University of New York Press: Albany), [Vol. 6, pp. 1/9]. The incident involved the matter of cleromancy before the idol Hubal during the pre-Islamic era.

² *Sunan* Ibn Mājah [Vol. 2, no.2291]

ibn Yunus.³ Evidently the *isnād* based upon its appearance is *Ṣaḥīḥ* according to the conditions set by al-Bukhāri. Some have though levelled criticism at it due to other reports, other than via the channel of Yusuf ibn Ishāq, which report it as a *mursal* tradition. Yet there is corroborating evidence from other reliable sources to substantiate it. There have been some who have rejected it on the basis that it was prior to a matter of *naskh* (abrogation). In my view, I am inclined towards believing that it relates to a specific incident and that the father only took the wealth that was originally rightfully his for the maintenance. That much can be gleaned from the following, an extended version with greater contextual wording, which has been recorded by al-Tabarāni in two of his respected collections, *Mu’jam al-Awsat* and *Mu’jam al-Saghīr*:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ بْنُ يَازِيدٍ الْبَارْدَهَى نَarrated to us in Egypt, Abu Salamah Ubaydallah ibn Khalṣa, namely one time of al-Nu’mān, Abdullah ibn Nāfi’ al-Madani narrated to us from al-Munkadir ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadir from his father from Jābir ibn Abdullah, he said – A man came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and he said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, my father has appropriated my wealth.’ The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and he said: *Bring your father to me*. Then, (the angel) Gabriel descended upon the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He said to him: ‘Allah sends you His greetings and says - When the old man comes to you, ask him about something he said to himself that his ears did not hear.’

When the man arrived, who was old, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him asked him: *What is it with regards to your son that he has complained about you? Do you intend to appropriate his wealth?* In reply he said: ‘Ask him O Messenger of Allah – did I spend (that wealth) on any other than his aunts or on myself?’ The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him said: *Enough. Tell us about something that you said to yourself, such that your ears didn’t hear.* In

³ Essentially the *ḥadīth* cited by al-Tabarāni [Vol. 7, no. 6728] is identical to that of Ibn Mājah, except that the beginning of the *isnād* starts with ‘Muḥammad ibn Abi Zur’ā narrated to us.’ A further mention is made also of the *ḥadīth* recorded in *Mu’jam al-Awsat* [Vol. 4, no. 3534] with the *isnād* ‘Habush ibn Rizq’Allah al-Maṣri narrated to us he said Abdullah ibn Yusuf narrated to us he said Esa ibn Yunus narrated to us,’ etc. The Arabic edition quotes these two in full.

reply, he said: 'By Allah, O Messenger of Allah. Allah continues to increase our conviction via you. Indeed, I said as such.' The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him said: *Speak, I am listening*. So he replied, I said:

*I fed you in childhood and took care of you when young
You lived on my earnings alone.*

*When on some night, you became sick, I spent the whole night
remaining awake and restless because of your sickness
As if your sickness was my own and not yours and because of which
my eyes kept shedding tears throughout the night
My heart kept trembling lest something happens to you, though I
knew that the time of death is fixed, being neither early nor late
So, when you reached the age and maturity that I had always been
looking forward to,
Then you made hard-heartedness and harshness my return as if you
were the one doing me favours and giving me rewards
Alas, if it was not possible for you to fulfil my right as a father, you
could have at the least done what a good neighbour would have done
So, you could have given me the least right of a neighbour and
abstained from becoming miserly in my case in my own property.*

Then, the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him took hold of the son by the scruff of the neck and said 'You and your wealth belong to your father.'⁴

In any event, of these 'owned partners,' about whom the Arab *mushrik* could evidently say, 'You own him and what he owns,' are but according to their belief, endowed with some aspect of *Ulūhiyyah* – divinity, even if it is held in a single aspect. Two-additional considerations may also invariably apply. The first, either because they – their supposed 'gods,' are believed to be the 'sons and daughters of Allah,' meaning they come from the divine essence, nature, or lineage of good and light. This is one of the most significant, prominent, and indeed well-known considerations. It is likely that what is

⁴ al-Tabarānī *Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr* [Vol. 2, no. 947] and *Mu'jam al-Awsāṭ* [Vol. 6, no. 6570]. Imām al-Ṭabarānī said: 'This *hadīth* is not narrated except by way of Muḥammad ibn al-Munkadīr with this complete poem, and except by way of this *isnād*. He is followed in that by Ubaydallāh ibn Khalṣā.

referred to in the words by the Exalted and Majestic in *Surah al-Zumar*, He says:

أَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أُولَئِكَ مَا تَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا بِلَغْرِبَوْنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ رُلْفَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ
بِتَنَمُّ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ لَوْ أَرَدَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَا صُطْقَى مَمَّا
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

True devotion is due to Allah alone. [As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, 'We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,' Allah Himself will judge between them regarding their differences.

Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar.

Allah could have chosen any of His creation He willed for offspring, but He is far above this! He is the One, the Almighty.⁵

More will be outlined on these verses in due course. Secondly, it may relate to the notion that they, the supposed 'gods' are believed to be the sons and daughters of *Iblees* - meaning they come from the evil and dark divine essence or lineage. They were captured and enslaved in certain wars and confrontations between good and evil. A third possibility is they are believed to be newly created evil beings, originally and inherently owned by Allah in true ownership, but they rebel against Him and are capable of escaping, meaning they can escape Allah by flight, thereby defying Him. Many Arabs believed this about the *Jinn*. Those referred to in the following verses from *Surah al-Rum*, are likely to be of this type:

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَمَّا مِنْ مَا مَلَكْتُ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ شَرَكَاءِ فِي مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ
تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَحِيقَتُهُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ كَذَلِكَ تُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ بَعْقَلُونَ

He gives you this example, drawn from your own lives: do you make your slaves full partners with an equal share in what We have given you? Do you fear them as you fear each other? This is how We make Our messages clear to those who use their reason.⁶

To believe in the existence of these divine attributes in a specific being, according to the one who holds this belief, i.e., the belief in divinity in that particular being, is the reason for seeking help, support, and refuge from it.

⁵ *Qur'ān*, 39: 3/4

⁶ *Qur'ān*, 30: 28

This also extends to asking it to bring accrued benefit, be that rain, fertility, crop-yield; to ward off harm etc. Specific rituals are therefore devoted to it – be that standing or sitting, bowing and prostrating, sacrificing offerings, lighting candles or incense, making gifts to its temples, spending on its caretakers, and celebrating it and its festivals with chants, hymns and ritualistic dancing. None of these actions *in and of themselves* is what makes that supposed entity ‘a god.’ Rather, in the minds of its believers, it is considered ‘a god’ *by its own essence and qualities*, even before and without such actions. All the outward and inward acts are merely the fruit of that belief and an expression of it. Hence the issue isn’t limited to that of having a share in *Mulk* - dominion or *Rububiyyah*, lordship, but rather being of a divine essence, nature or lineage. That is more fundamental and critically dangerous. For that reason, it is not correct what Ibn Taymiyyah has set out in his seminal work, *Dar’ Ta’āruḍ al-‘Aql wal’Naql*:

For this reason, the Almighty said: ‘*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins*,’ [21: 22]. He did not say, ‘Had there been two gods.’ Rather, the intended meaning is gods other than the known Allah, who is acknowledged as the true deity. No one disputes that Allah is the true *Ilāh*; the dispute is - whether one can take another as a god alongside Him while He is the Sovereign? That is why He said: ‘*He gives you this example, drawn from your own lives: do you make your slaves full partners with an equal share in what We have given you? Do you fear them as you fear each other? This is how We make Our messages clear to those who use their reason*,’ [30: 28].

And He the Almighty (further) said: ‘*True devotion is due to Allah alone. [As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, ‘We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,’ Allah Himself will judge between them regarding their differences. Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar*,’ [39: 3]. (Finally), He said: ‘*Yet they take intercessors besides Allah! Say, ‘Even though these have no power or understanding?’ Say, ‘All intercession belongs to Allah alone; He holds control of the heavens and the earth; in the end you will all return to Him.’ Whenever God is mentioned on His own, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion, but they rejoice when gods other than Him are mentioned*,’

[39: 43/45]. The discussion was expanded about this topic regarding its relevant parts.⁷

Further to this, what has been recorded in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Kathir regarding this matter. He writes:

Just as He is the One in His dominion, He should be the One in His worship. Often, the Almighty affirms the station of divinity by acknowledging *al-Rububiyyah*. The *mushrikeen* had acknowledged this, as they would declare in their *Talbiyyah*: ‘*At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns*.’⁸

In response we would ask, where did Imām Ibn Kathir find in the wording of their *Talbiyyah* as mentioned, or for that matter in any of the historical narratives, that they *admitted* that these ‘partners’ were created by Him? Particularly acute since the text of Qur’ān outlines in dozens of verses that they *attribute offspring* to Him. If such supposed ‘offspring’ is a part of the father, then they are of the same nature and essence of the father, not created by the father! We find the same mistake made by Ibn ‘Aāshur in *al-Tahrir wal’Tanweer*:

The meaning is – don’t affirm *Andād* (equals or rivals) to Allah, making them so, when they are not as such. They are called ‘*Andād*’ as an allusion to their claim, because the state of the Arabs in their worship of these beings was like that of someone who equates them with Allah, even though the people of *Jāhiliyyah* would say that these gods were intercessors. They would say, ‘We only worship them to bring us closer to Allah.’ They even regarded Allah as the Creator of these gods, as reflected in what they expressed in the *Talbiyyah*: ‘*At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns*.’⁹

⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah *Dar’ Ta’āruḍ al-‘Aql wal’Naql* [Vol. 9, p. 369]. An abridged version of this quote was already mentioned in the previous volume (2), in the chapter of *Fasad*.

⁸ *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir [Vol. 6, p. 294]

⁹ Ibn ‘Aāshur *al-Tahrir wal’Tanweer* [Vol. 1, p. 334]

Compounding the error, making it even more severe, Ibn ‘Aāshur continues:

But when they worshiped these beings, and through their worship, devotion to them, vows made, and the holding of festivals around them, they forgot the worship of Allah. Their actions became like those of people who believe in equality between these beings and Allah the Exalted, because the significance lies in actions, not words. In this is a subtle allusion to their inconsistency and the contradiction between their words and actions.¹⁰

Subḥānallāh! Where did Ibn ‘Aāshur find in their statements, let along the historical record, that they ‘made Allah the creator of the gods’? Again, this is particularly acute since the text of Qur’ān outlines in dozens of verses that they *attribute offspring* to Him. For *Shirk* to occur and begin to take root, it starts with the belief that *any aspect* of divinity is placed in something other than Allah. That makes it being put on par with Allah as a rival, in essence meaning upon the same level, even if that doesn’t necessarily mean exact equality, it can be even a single particular aspect, let alone any others. No meaning is to be found in the remainder of Ibn ‘Aāshur’s comments, nor does anything arise from them.

Switching gears, how on earth was it fathomable for the late Professor Muḥammad Ibrāhim al-Fayoumi to argue:

Therefore, when the (Arab) tribes of Kināna and the Quraysh would undertake the pilgrimage, they would say – ‘At Your service, O Allah, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns.’ They would declare His Oneness with their *Talbiyyah*, but then include their *Aṣnām*, making them partners with Him; attributing ownership and possession; by the statement of Allah the Almighty: ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him*,’ [12: 106]. (Here) meaning that they don’t recognise My Oneness by right except that they make partners from among My creation.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Muḥammad Ibrāhim al-Fayoumi *Tārikh al-Fikr al-Deeni al-Jāhili*, (‘The History of Pre-Islamic Religious Thought,’ Shamela edition) [p. 466].

This is advanced instead of the correct statement, which is that: ‘Most of them do not believe in part of what is My due right, except while they take a god, rival, or a partner besides Me.’

Conclusion

Regardless of how much one reviews the statements made upon the matter, the essential point is that this will only lead to the following. Firstly, the claim that the term ‘*tamleekuhu*’ – ‘you possess it,’ necessarily carries the meaning that you created it; possess it completely, having total dominion over it. Indeed this is necessarily true in the case of Allah, if He is known correctly by way of correct and true ‘*Imān*. However, this isn’t the case as it applies to the deficient beliefs which were carried by the *mushrikeen*, let alone in their deeply flawed knowledge and distorted perception, as has been demonstrably shown thus far.

Secondly, there is a blatant stubbornness, bordering on obstinacy in seeking to maintain the falsity, indeed slander, that the Arab *mushrikeen* acknowledged what is termed *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, regardless of what precise definition one utilises. That matter has been shown to be demonstrably false. Further clarifications upon that will be outlined in due course. Lastly, advocating fanciful inventions that are of no use let alone having no real underlying connection to the subject at all provide no enlightenment. One should not pay heed to the statements made by Ibn Aāshur as set out earlier.

5. Tawheed as it relates to Creation

‘Tawheed al-Khāliqiyah,’ Tawheed as it pertains to the matter of creation, is the decisive conviction that Allah alone is capable of creation, formation, bringing about a state of existence from non-existence in the truest sense of the word. There is no being or entity other than Allah which has this ability through their own inherent power. Allah retains this independently. If such an ability or capacity exists, it is only in a very limited sense, being derived from a power that Allah *has bestowed* upon the creation. Thereby, it operates only with His permission, decree and empowerment to do so. Such matters necessarily are established through the dictates and necessity of reason. Revelation has come to provide a further concrete proof upon this, with elaboration of the specific meanings. This matter is outlined in many texts, among them being:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلْمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ

Praise belongs to Allah who created the heavens and the earth and made darkness and light; yet the disbelievers set up equals to their Lord!¹

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
The Creator of the heavens and earth! How could He have children when He has no spouse, when He created all things, and has full knowledge of all things?²

¹ Qur’ān, 6: 1

² Qur’ān, 6: 101

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَدَهُبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him, if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be exalted above what they describe!³

Allah, may His names be sanctified has explained that none other than Him has created anything, therefore, there is no partner with Him in that respect.

أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخُلُقُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَلِلَّهِ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

Have the partners they assign to Allah created anything like His creation so that their creation is indistinguishable from His? Say, ‘Allah is the Creator of all things: He is the One, the All Compelling.’⁴

For the Muslims, custom has curtailed use of the word ‘creation’ together with derivatives except in reference to the right of Allah the Almighty and Exalted. There is quite a strong aversion to utilising the term in common parlance for anyone other than Allah, a notable example being the descriptive phrase of ‘a creative mind’ and instead using ‘an inventive mind.’ Broadly this is good mannerism worthy of observance and maintenance. Although it is not prohibitive per se. An example of this can be seen from the express wording as set out in the following verse, where Allah the Almighty said about Jesus, son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother:

وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهْيَنَةَ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي

By My leave, you created the shape of a bird out of clay, breathed into it, and it became, by My leave, a bird.⁵

Allah does not use false expressions. It is evidently known that the example here of creation by the hand of Jesus is not the same as the creation of life by the permission of Allah. While both falling under the wording of ‘creation,’ the two are not of the same type, with a vast difference between them. By His very essence, Allah being the Creator, is a part of the meaning relating to Him

³ Qur’ān, 23: 91

⁴ Qur’ān, 13: 16

⁵ Qur’ān, 5: 110

being *Ilāh* (God). There is no direct conceptional relation to Him being *Rabb* (lord). This invalidates the attempted definition which was given by the Imām, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah for what he dubbed as ‘*Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*,’ for which he put being the Creator at the top of that list for the definition. As we have previously elucidated regarding the definition of the word *Rabb*, this is incorrect. Placing the concept of creation neatly within the concept of *Rububiyyah* is not one that naturally fits, despite the acrobatics. Ibn Taymiyyah’s tripartite definition of *Tawheed* becomes flawed, indeed invalidated from this perspective. And there is no might, nor power except by Allah.

Yet the correct understanding is that Allah the Exalted created all creation from nothingness, from non-existence, to know, thank and worship Him. He the Almighty has created for His own sake, by His will, since there is no other god/deity; there is no other necessary being or entity besides Him that deserves to be created for. Or for that matter, to whom his Lordship, in other words, His absolute ownership and sovereignty can be transferred to. There is no ‘other’ necessarily existent being besides Him, to whom all creation belongs; only He possesses all and independent dominion. From this, it necessarily follows that all creation is deemed His property and in servitude to Him. He, without question, is their Lord. He is Lord of all worlds and all creation, because *He created them*. His Lordship is a branch and a necessary result of His ownership of creation, not vice versa.

Opposing types of polytheism

There are various sub-divisions of *Shirk* held at the doctrinal level which are opposed to this aspect of *Tawheed*. Varied, but among them are the following:

- The notion that ‘evil’ is created by a deity of evil, by way of its own inherent independent power, which is perceived to be either in opposition to, or at least against the will of Allah, contrary to His will and purpose. In general, this is the view held by the Zoroastrians, who are dualists. Some of them argue that the god/deity/entity of evil is ancient and eternal, which is a combination of *Shirk al-Dhāt* (polytheism relating to the divine essence), as explained previously, with *Shirk al-Khalq wal’Takween*. Moreover, others from among

them have made the claim that the ‘god of evil’ is a created being, thereby not ancient or eternal, hence making the point of *Shirk* solely to the latter.

- A belief that there are multiple gods/deities who each have a share in the creation of different parts of the world. Each god/deity being independent and self-sufficient, not reliant upon any of the others. Many primitive *mushrikeen* held this view, notably, among the ancient Greeks, who designated ‘gods’ to various aspects of the world – god of the sea, god of the underworld, etc.
- Attribution of creation to ‘nature.’ This rests upon the idea or belief that ‘nature’ brought existence into being by way of its inherent properties, which by necessity, can’t be violated or overturned. Some philosophers and naturalists cling to this viewpoint. As a result of this belief, its adherents deny outright the miracles of the Prophets. Most are atheists who deny the existence of Allah.
- Lastly, is the belief which ascribes to the view that creation, and created beings, came into existence without the permission of Allah, or even against His will. An example of this is the supposed ‘god of evil’ that the Zoroastrians believe in, as mentioned earlier. They argue: ‘When God finished creation, He looked at it and was pleased. He thought - is there anyone who could challenge this sovereignty and ruin this perfectly ordered universe? The malicious thought manifested into a defiant devil, (which was) absolute pure evil, whose sole purpose is to ruin God’s work and challenge His sovereignty.’ An utter absurdity, but this does suggest the notion of creation against the will of Allah and without a Creator. One could argue that it is construed as being an emanation or birth from a thought, which would also seemingly make it *Shirk al-Dhāt*. In any event, such an example shows the combination of multiple impossibilities, contradictions and absurdities into a single *Shirk* concept.

Notwithstanding the above, it must be known with absolute certitude beyond doubt, that the main significance resides in the true essence and central core contents of the belief, regardless of which names or labels may be attributed to it. Whomsoever attributes to anyone or anything other than Allah the ability

to create and marshal into existence from nothingness or non-existence, independently, as the dualistic Zoroastrians did, has ascribed to that supposed god/deity/entity, the *attributes* of divinity. It is effectively to make *another god* besides Allah. It is not massively relevant what name those who do this give to that supposed god/deity/entity – whether they even call it a god, a devil, a spirit, mother nature, or anything else. It is not entirely relevant what specific actions adherents of that doctrine undertake, be that veneration, obedience, or the like. The essential point here is the content and nature of that belief, not the attributed names or even the acts upon which its devotees undertake. The latter, has a different consideration and is to be analysed in its appropriate context.

6. **Tawheed of Dominion, Administration, and Creative Disposition**

Tawheed in relation to ‘Sovereignty, Management, and Creational Authority’ refers to the definitive belief that Allah alone governs the cosmos and exercises absolute authority over it, independently and autonomously. It encompasses the understanding that Allah determines all measures and decrees, such that nothing occurs within creation except through His knowledge, decree, and permission. No agent acts within creation except with Allah’s leave, by virtue of the capacity bestowed upon them by Allah, the innate properties instilled within them, and the natural dispositions granted to them, all of which operate in subordination to Allah’s prior determination, decree, and knowledge, rather than by any intrinsic autonomy or independent will.

This dimension of *Tawheed* referred to as *Tawheed al-Mulk wal’ Tadbeer wal Taṣṣaraf al-Takweeni* [تَوْحِيدُ الْمَلْكِ وَالتَّدْبِيرِ وَالتَّصْرِيفِ التَّكَوِينِيِّ] *Tawheed* pertaining to ‘Sovereignty, Management, and Creational Authority,’ is in essence, synonymous with *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*, or more precisely, creational *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*. Historically, much of the *Shirk* prevalent among the Arabs and other simpler communities of *mushrikeen* stemmed from a deficiency in this aspect of belief. Thus, the Qur’ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah* are replete with countless texts emphasising this reality. Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, specifically distinguished belief in *al-Qadr*, its good, bad, all of it stemming from Allah the Almighty, as a standalone pillar of *al-‘Imān*, given its intrinsic connection to this topic. He the Almighty and Exalted says:

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُنَبِّئُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ
Then established Himself on the Throne, governing everything; there is no one that can intercede with Him, unless He has first given permission: this is Allah your Lord so worship Him. How can you not take heed?¹

فَلَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمْنَ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ
الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيَّ وَمَنْ يَدْبِرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقْلَ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

Say [Prophet], ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs everything? ‘They are sure to say, ‘Allah.’ Then say, ‘So why do you not take heed of Him?’²

It is evident through the necessities of sensory perception and reason, as well as definitively affirmed by the texts of revelation, that the universe operates through consistent laws, wherein causes and effects follow one another in a customary and perpetual manner/ Fire, for instance, consistently burns dry wood, and the pure water of rainfall causes vegetation to grow. Similarly, the universe is filled with entities possessing will and choice, which act, move, come and go. All of these are contingencies that are dependent on one another. It is logically inconceivable for these phenomena to be necessitated by their intrinsic essence, as they are, by their very nature, created, contingent, and possible, not necessary, eternal, or self-sufficient. How then could their attributes, actions, and states which are secondary to their essence, be deemed necessary or obligatory?

Thus, it is inevitable that all of this occurs by the decree of Allah, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, who alone is necessary in His existence, pre-eternal without beginning and everlasting without end. Therefore, all occurrences in the universe are not due to intrinsic necessity or independence, but by the will of Allah - through His knowledge, will, creation, management, and cosmic permission. There is no god or deity except Him, nor any lord besides Him. Upon Him we rely, and through Him we seek strength. This is precisely the meaning of the phrase: ‘*al-Qadr* - its good and its evil, are from Allah, the Exalted,’ without excess or deficiency.

¹ *Qur’ān*, 10: 3

² *Qur’ān*, 10: 31

While people may have included many other concepts under the title of *al-Qadr*’ wal-*Qadr* [القضاء والقدر] much of it is imagined and false. These topics have caused confusion among researchers, but addressing such matters requires a separate treatise, which is still under preparation. Intrinsic necessity or independence in action can only belong to a god or deity. Believing in the realisation of such characteristics in anything other than Allah constitutes *Shirk*, which stands in total contradiction to Islam and expels its adherent from the faith, assuming they had previously entered into it with a sound covenant. This dimension of *Tawheed* is contradicted by several forms of doctrinal *Shirk*. Among them, as examples rather than an exhaustive list, are the following: The belief held by some of the *Ṣābi’ah* (star-worshippers) and worshippers of celestial bodies, asserting that the stars or the intellects, souls, and angelic spirits residing within them possess knowledge of the lower world and act upon it independently.

Second, is the claim of many *mushrikeen*, including the *mushrikeen* among the Arabs, that the minor deities, by virtue of their divine essence and familial or relational ties to the greater deities, independently manage certain affairs of their devotees. This may occur either directly or through intercession, without prior permission, as a mediation that is always accepted and never rejected by the greater deities.

Thirdly, is the assertion of some naturalist philosophers that the arrangement of causes and effects occurs by a necessary and unbreakable order, such that one cannot be separated from the other under any circumstance. This belief is likewise a form of doctrinal *Shirk*, wholly contradictory to Islam and expelling its adherents from the faith, assuming they had previously entered into it. This view also contradicts the truth established by definitive rational and scriptural evidence, which demonstrates that the connection between causes and effects is not necessary but rather ‘customary,’ ‘assigned,’ or ‘decreed.’ This means that Allah has assigned these connections by His will and permission, maintaining them in accordance with a customary pattern, not by absolute rational or conceptual necessity that precludes alteration.

Fourth, comes the attribution to some extreme proponents of the Qadariyyah sect that the voluntary acts of human beings occur without Allah’s permission or decree. These individuals, when challenged in debate, may adhere to the position that such acts occur despite Allah’s will, or that Allah

was incapable of preventing them, statements that are entirely removed from the majesty and perfection of Allah. It is important to hasten to clarify that the intent of most of those described as ‘extreme Qadariyyah’ is not explicitly apparent, and we do not know of any adherent of Islam from among the Qadariyyah who has made or upheld such claims. However, these views are consequences implied by the statements of some of their extremists. This may explain why certain eminent scholars of *hadith* referred to them as the ‘Magians of this *Ummah*,’ a term often used, particularly in the heat of polemics, when tempers flare, verbal exchanges intensify, and reason gives way to emotion, leaving no refuge except in Allah, the Exalted and Almighty. Nonetheless, it is critical to emphasise that the necessary implications of a statement are not binding upon its proponent unless they explicitly affirm and adhere to them. To impose on a person a position they have not committed to is an act of injustice and aggression, a method characteristic of those engaged in contentious argumentation and sophistry, and indeed the approach of the innovators and people of whims. However, a detailed exposition of this subject falls outside the scope of this treatise - praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

It appears to us that the extreme proponents of the Qadariyyah merely denied that Divine Foreknowledge directly encompasses the specific outcomes of human voluntary actions in each particular case. Rather, they held that Allah’s prior knowledge comprehends all possible outcomes that could occur, and that Allah permits any of these possibilities to materialise upon the determination of the will of the creature endowed with choice, and the occurrence of the corresponding action. For them, it is inconceivable that any of this could transpire without Allah’s permission, for He is eternally and perpetually capable of preventing it. None can overpower Him, nor can anyone escape His authority. Hence, in their view, there is no *Shirk* in the realms of management and governance, and thus no justification for branding them with the label: ‘the Magians of this *Ummah*.’ However, the issue of Divine Foreknowledge, specifically the problem of *al-Qaḍā*’ (the Divine Decree) remains unresolved. This is distinct from the matter of *al-Qadr* (Divine Predestination), despite the confusion of many who conflate the two and erroneously claim that belief in them is a singular concept. This is a complex, critical, and profoundly significant matter, but its full exploration lies beyond the scope of this discussion.

What has been outlined above is a list of the clearest and most well-known examples that have come to our attention. Others may identify additional examples, or further instances related to these cases. The forms and layers of *Shirk* are numerous, overlapping, and interwoven, akin to the layers of darkness in the depths of a vast ocean, with waves above it, and clouds above those waves – ‘darkness upon darkness.’ By contrast, the guidance and light of truth are singular, clear, and radiant, and they are embodied in what was brought by Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah and Seal of the Prophets. Upon him and his family be prayers, salutations, and blessings from Allah, the Sovereign Truth and the Manifest Light. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all creation.

Indeed in this matter Imām Ibn Taymiyyah was correct in including *Tadbeer* (management) and *Taṣṣaraf* (governance) under the broader category of Lordship - *al-Rububiyyah*, as the concepts of management and governance are natural extensions of *siyādah* (sovereignty) and *tamalluk* (ownership). These are, by necessity, interconnected aspects of the same reality, as we have previously elaborated in discussing the concept of Lordship. However, it must also be known with absolute certainty, free from any doubt, that what truly matters is the reality of belief and the essence of conceptualisation, irrespective of terminology or phrasing. Thus, whoever claims any of the following has thereby ascribed a rival to Allah:

1. That anyone besides Allah possesses, in the presence of Allah, an intercession that is never rejected or that does not require explicit permission under any circumstances.
2. That someone other than Allah governs the universe independently, without Allah’s permission, will, or decree.
3. That anyone other than Allah possesses a power or authority that rivals Allah’s, even in a single instance or aspect, such as:
 - (a) Claiming that anyone besides Allah can impose upon Allah;
 - (b) Asserting that anyone besides Allah can escape the ‘grasp’ of Allah, that is, that someone exists beyond Allah’s divine control, capable of fleeing or evading Allah, rendering Him incapable of apprehending them. Such beliefs are held by some ignorant common folk, such as certain African communities and others, regarding *jinn*, lower spirits, or demonic entities.

4. That Allah does not directly manage or govern creation, but instead “requires,” due to some deficiency in His power, an intermediary to govern creation on His behalf; or that creation itself, due to some perceived indifference or deficiency in Allah’s care, or owing to His transcendence and remoteness, necessitates intermediaries to manage their affairs and present their petitions to Him from below to above. This is akin to the beliefs of star-worshippers, those who venerate the seven or ten intellects, and similar groups.
5. That someone other than Allah governs creation or manages its affairs because Allah, while possessing perfect knowledge and power, only knows universal realities but is unaware of the specific states of individual creatures. Therefore, the celestial intellects, souls, angels, or secondary deities must necessarily and inevitably undertake the governance of the universe.
6. Or that someone other than Allah manages creation, or parts of it, because Allah - despite His perfect knowledge and power - has removed it from His dominion and transferred true ownership to another being. This transfer is considered an absolute and final delegation, irrevocable and binding, whereby the other entity manages creation by its own discretion, issues judgments according to its own authority, and implements decrees based on its own commands. In this view, the entity is not merely a cause, intermediary, or instrument but a true partner – *sharīk*, in sovereignty and ownership, sharing in these capacities with Allah in a genuine sense.

Whoever claims any of these beliefs has thereby ascribed a rival to Allah, attributing to another being some of the qualities exclusive to divinity. This equates to elevating that being to the status of a god or deity alongside Allah, regardless of what it is called. Whether one names it a god, an intercessor, a mediator, a king, a celestial intellect, a stellar spirit, a planetary soul, a saint, a pole, a helper, or any other title; the true criterion is the content and essence of the belief itself, nothing more, nothing less, not the terminology used. Indeed, whoever attributes any of these qualities to someone or something other than Allah has made that entity a deity besides Allah. By doing so, they are a *mushrik* and a *kāfir*, who has apostatised from Islam and exited its fold,

assuming they had previously entered into it with a sound covenant. This remains true regardless of the names or terms employed. Moreover, it is irrelevant what actions the individual performs as a result of such beliefs. Whether they express veneration, love, devotion, and obedience, or enmity, hatred, distance, and disobedience, or even indifference and apathy, the ultimate standard is always the essence and reality of the belief itself - not the names, words, or deeds arising from it. As previously mentioned, and as will be thoroughly addressed and elaborated upon in the remainder of this treatise through analysis, discussion, foundational principles, and derived rulings, the essence of belief remains the decisive factor.

requiring detailed elucidation. For that reason, we seek the help of Allah and have provided a separate study for that which will follow in the next volume.

7. *Tawheed al-Hākimiyah*

The matter of *Tawheed* as it pertains to *al-Hākimiyah wal'Tashrih* (governance, legislation and the ultimate prerogative of command) is also the same as that of *Tawheed* as it relates to *al-Mulk* (dominion), *al-Tadbeer* (management) and *al-Taṣṣaraf wal'Tashrih* (the legislative act or authority). It can also be expressed as being *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah wal' Tashrihiyyat* (lordship and legislation). As outlined exhaustively already, emphasis has been placed upon the concept that recognition, submission and surrender to Allah in terms of *al-Hākimiyah* is the pinnacle or apex of *Tawheed*.

Notwithstanding this, the ultimate nature of this concept has been misunderstood by the followers of the previous scriptures, as can be readily seen from the story of ‘Adi ibn Ḥātim, may Allah be pleased with him. The rot though, doesn’t end there. It has been compounded by misunderstanding that exists generally among the people but also among those who claim that only *they* uphold ‘the correct pure’ *Tawheed* - the sect of Wahhābism. With their vain claims that only they cling to the ‘*Aqeedah Salafiyyah al-Šaḥīhat*,’ they have sought to obfuscate the true meaning of this concept. One of their preachers even authored a book entitled ‘*Qutubism is the Fitna, Recognise it*,’ in a failed attempt to assert the lie that the ultimate sovereignty and prerogative of command which belongs to Allah is somehow a modern-day ‘*fitna*.’ Changing the name of *al-Hākimiyah* to one of ‘*Qutubism*’ is perhaps another trap and satanic deception, not all that different from those who had justified drinking alcohol by calling it another name.

Indeed, the topic itself of *al-Hākimiyah*, is one that is critically important. Within that are contained many important discussions each

8. Some matters related to the most beautiful names of Allah

Imām Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī produced a very valuable treatise about the most beautiful names of Allah which he titled: *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Asmā' Allah al-Husna*.¹ He mentioned that despite the multiplicity of most beautiful Names of Allah, they are not synonyms and each one of them has a different meaning that is not included in the others. As he eloquently expounds:

Perhaps you will say: there are many names here, and you have kept them from being synonymous and demanded that each one comprise a distinct meaning, so how will you resolve all of them to seven attributes? You should know that if there be seven attributes, there are still many actions and many attributes, the totality of which almost exceeds enumeration. Moreover, it is possible to make a composite from the sum of two attributes, or from an attribute with something added, or from an attribute with a negation, or from an attribute with a negation and something added; and then posit a name corresponding to each one so as to increase the number of names. And the totality of them may be resolved into those which indicate (1) the essence, (2) the essence with a negation, (3) the essence with something added, (5) one of the seven attributes, an attribute with negation, (6,7,8) an attribute with something added, (9) an attribute of action (10) with something added or negated — and these make ten possibilities.

¹ The full treatise is available in English: *Al-Ghazali on the Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, (1995) Translated by David Burrell and Nazih Daher, (Islamic Texts Society: Cambridge).

First: what indicates the essence, as in your saying 'Allah.' And the name *al-Haqq* (the Truth) is close to it, since that means the essence in so far as it is necessary existence.²

Second: what indicates the essence with a negation, like *al-Quddus* (the Holy), *al-Salām* (the Flawless), *al-Ghāni* (the Rich), *al-Wāhid* (the One), and those like them. For *al-Quddus* is one from whom everything which occurs to one's mind or enters into the imagination has been negated, as *al-Salām* is one from whom all defects have been negated, and *al-Ghāni* is one devoid of need, while *al-Wāhid* is deprived of a similar or of divisibility.

Third: what refers to the essence with something added, like *al-Ali* (the Most High), *al-'Azeem* (the Tremendous), *al-Awwal* (the First), *al-'Akhir* (the Last), *al-Zāhir* (the Manifest), *al-Bātin* (the Hidden), and those like them. So *al-Ali* is the essence whose degree is above the general run of essences, therefore it is in addition to them; and *al-'Azeem* refers to the essence insofar as the limits of perception are transcended; while *al-Awwal* comes before all existing things, and *al-'Akhir* is the one who is subsequent to the final end of existing things. *al-Zāhir* is the essence with respect to demonstrations of reason, and 'the Hidden' is the essence as it relates to perceptions of sense and imagination. Look for the rest in this way.

Fourth: what refers to the essence with negation and addition, like *al-Malik* (the King), *al-Aziz* (the Eminent). *Al-Malik* refers to an essence which needs nothing while everything needs it, and *al-Aziz* is one whom nothing is like and one whose level is difficult to attain or to achieve.

Fifth: what refers to an attribute, like *al-'Alim* (the Omniscient), *al-Qādir* (the all-Powerful), *al-Hayy* (the Living), *al-Sami'* (the all-Hearing), *al-Basir* (the all-Seeing).

Sixth: what refers to knowing with something in addition, like *al-Hakim* (the Wise), *al-Khabir* (the Totally Aware), *al-Shahid* (the Universal Witness), and *al-Muhsi* (the Knower of each separate thing). For *al-Khabir* refers to knowledge in relation to hidden things, and *al-Shahid* refers to knowledge in relation to what can be seen, and *al-*

² Ibid, pp. 159/161. The original Arabic text has this citation in a slightly abridged format, here it is presented in full.

Hakim refers to knowledge in relation to the most noble objects, while *al-Muhsî* refers to knowledge insofar as it comprehends objects limited to what is countable in detail.

Seventh: what refers to power with something more added, like *al-Qahhâr* (the Dominator), *al-Qawi* (the Strong), *al-Muqtadir* (the all-Determiner), and *al-Matin* (the Firm). Now strength is the perfection of power, and firmness its intensification, while dominating is its effect in being able to conquer.

Eighth: what refers to will with something added or in connection with action, like *al-Rahman* (the Infinitely Good), *al-Rahîm* (the Merciful), *al-Râ'uf* (the all-Pitying) and *al-Wadud* (the Loving-kind). These refer to will in relation to good deeds or fulfilling the needs of the weak, and you have come to know what that involves.

Ninth: what refers to attributes of action, like *al-Khalîq* (the Creator), *al-Bâri* (the Producer), *al-Muṣawwir* (the Fashioner), *al-Wâhhâb* (the Bestower), *al-Râzzâq* (the Provider), *al-Fattâh* (the Opener), *al-Qâbid* (He who contracts), *al-Bâsît* (He who expands), *al-Khafîd* (the Abaser), *al-Râfi* (the Exalter), *al-Mu'izz* (the Honourer), *al-Mudhîll* (He who humbles), *al-'Adl* (the Just), *al-Muqit* (the Nourisher), *al-Muhyî* (the Life Giver), *al-Mu'mit* (the Slayer), *al-Muqaddîm* (the Promoter), *al-Mu'âkhir* (the Postponer), *al-Wâli* (the Ruler), *al-Bârr* (the Doer of Good), *al-Tâwwâb* (the Ever-Relenting), *al-Muntaqîm* (the Avenger), *al-Muqṣît* (the Equitable), *al-Jâmi'* (the Uniter), *al-Manî'* (the Protector), *al-Mughnî* (the Enricher), *al-Hâdi* (the Guide) and those that are like them.

Tenth: what refers to an indication of action with something more, like *al-Mâjîd* (the all-Glorious), *al-Kârîm* (the Generous) and *al-Lâtîf* (the Benevolent). For *al-Mâjîd* refers to an abundance of kindness together with nobility of essence, and likewise for *al-Kârîm*, while *al-Lâtîf* refers to gentleness in action.

Truly, al-Ghazâlî has presented a beautiful discourse containing diligent elaboration.

9. The Virtue of *Tawheed*

Allah the Exalted says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

*It is those who have faith, and do not mix their 'Imân with zulm, who will be secure, and it is they who are rightly guided.*¹

And it is proven with the most authentic channels of transmission that this was difficult for the noble Companions to grasp, so they said: 'Who amongst us does not do wrong to himself?' Upon hearing that, the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him explained that the intended meaning of the verse related to *Shirk*. Then he, peace and blessings be upon him, recited the verse where Allah said:

وَإِذْ قَالَ لِقَمَانُ لَابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعْظِهُ يَا بْنَيَ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشَّرِكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

*Luqmân counselled his son, 'My son, do not attribute any partners to Allah: attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong.'*²

The narration where this is set out appears throughout the entire corpus of *ahâdîth*, being cited in the collections of al-Bukhârî, Muslim, al-Tirmidhî, Ibn

¹ *Qur'ân*, 6: 82. The wording used by Professor Haleem is 'do not mix their faith with idolatry'; we have opted to transliterate that portion of the verse instead given the explanation which subsequently follows.

² *Qur'ân*, 31: 13.

Hibbān, *Musnad* Ahmād, *Musnad* al-Ṭayālī as well as many others.³ It would seem that Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, was not present in attendance when this was revealed, nor did he appear to know about it, instead being informed of it by ‘Ubay ibn Ka’b. Indeed, that is related in the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim:

حدثني علي بن حمذاد العدل قال أخبرني الحارث بن أبي أسامة أخبرنا روح بن عبادة حدثنا حماد بن زيد عن علي بن زيد عن سعيد بن المسيب أن عمر بن الخطاب أتى على هذه الآية الذين أمنوا ولم يلسو إيمانهم بظاهره، فأتى أبي بن كعب فسألة: أئنا لم يظلم؟ فقال له: يا أمير المؤمنين: إنما ذاك الشرك، أما سمعت قول لقمان لابنه: يا بني لا تشرك بالله إن الشرك لظلم عظيم

Ali ibn Ḥamshadh al-‘Adl narrated to me he said al-Ḥārith Usāma reported to us Rawḥ ibn ‘Abidah reported to us Ḥammād ibn Zayd narrated to us from Ali ibn Zayd from Sa’eed ibn al-Mussayib that Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb came upon the verse: ‘It is those who have faith, and do not mix their ‘Imān with zulm.’ [6: 82]. So he came to ‘Ubay ibn Ka’b and asked him, ‘which of us has not been wronged?’ He replied, ‘O Ameer al-Mu’mineen, that is related to *Shirk*. Have you not heard of Luqmān saying this to his son? *My son, do not attribute any partners to Allah: attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong.*⁴

Allah, may His Names be sanctified said the following while praising Ibrāhim peace be upon him:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَاتِنًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

*Abraham was truly an example: devoutly obedient to Allah and true in faith. He was not an idolater.*⁵

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ إِنَّ أَوَّلَ النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ أَمْنَوْا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

³ The original Arabic edition lists more than twenty references to where the *hadith* is cited across the entire corpus. Suffice for the present translation, is to cite the references to *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 1, no. 32; vol. 3, no. 3181, 3245 and 3246; vol. 4, no. 4353, vol. 6, no. 6520, 6538] and that of *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 1, no. 124].

⁴ al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak* [Vol. 3, no. 5330]

⁵ *Qur’ān*, 16: 120

Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. *He was upright and devoted to Allah, never an idolater, and the people who are closest to him are those who truly follow his ways, this Prophet, and [true] believers - Allah is close to [true] believers.*⁶

فَلَمْ يَكُنْ إِلَيْهِ رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطِ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قَيْمًا مِلَّةً إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ إِنْ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايِي وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِئْلِكَ أَمْرِتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

*Say, ‘My Lord has guided me to a straight path, an upright religion, *the faith of Abraham, a man of pure faith*. He was not a polytheist.’ Say: ‘My prayers and sacrifice, my life and death, are all for Allah, Lord of all the Worlds; He has no partner. This is what I am commanded, and I am the first to devote myself to Him.’⁷*

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْنَدُوا فَلَمْ يَكُنْ مِلَّةً إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوْتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوْتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نَفَرَقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

*They say, ‘Become Jews or Christians, and you will be rightly guided.’ Say [Prophet], ‘No, [ours is] *the religion of Abraham, the upright, who did not worship any god besides Allah*.’ So [you believers], say, ‘We believe in Allah and in what was sent down to us and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we devote ourselves to Him.’⁸*

The word ‘ummah’ mentioned here in the verse means: the leader and the model who teaches people goodness. He peace be upon him was indeed that leader when he was the only Muslim in his age. The Arabic word *al-Qānit* means the ever obedient. As for the word, *al-Hanif* it means, lexically, ‘the inclined’ or ‘the slanting,’ and it means here ‘the devotee of Allah’ and ‘the renouncer of everything but Allah.’ He was neither hypocritical when it comes to the *Deen* of Allah, nor did he care about the anger of Allah’s enemies in obeying Him, unlike the ‘religious scholars’ of the present tyrant rulers and their ilk, may Allah bring all of them down. From ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit, may

⁶ *Qur’ān*, 3: 67/68

⁷ *Qur’ān*, 6: 161/163

⁸ *Qur’ān*, 2: 135/136

Allah be pleased with him, he narrated the following from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him:

من شهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأن محمداً عبده ورسوله، وأن عيسى عبد الله ورسوله وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم موروث منه، والجنة حق، والنار حق، أدخله الله الجنة على ما كان من العمل

Whosoever bears witness (testifies) that there is no god but Allah, He has no partners and that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger, and that Jesus is the slave of Allah and His Messenger; the word of Allah that He bestowed upon Mary, a soul created by Him, that Jannah is real and al-Nar is real, Allah will admit him into Paradise with the deeds he has done.⁹

The *hadith* is resolutely *Sahīh*, it is reported by al-Bukhāri in his *Sahīh* with the *isnād*: Șadaqa ibn al-Faḍl narrated to us al-Waleed narrated to us from al-‘Awzā’i, he said Umayr ibn Hāni narrated to us he said Junāda ibn Abi Umaya narrated to us from ‘Ubādah ibn al-Şāmit from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Al-Waleed said: Ibn Jabir narrated to me from ‘Umayr from Junāda with the addition, ‘*Such a person can enter paradise through any of its eight gates he likes.*’ Imām Muslim also records this in his *Sahīh*, and it also is contained within the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Nasā’i, the *Musnad al-Shāmīeен* of al-Tabarāni, as well as many others.¹⁰ Also in the famous *Sahīh* *hadith* which is narrated by ‘Itban ibn Mālik, it is said: ‘*Allah has forbidden the fire to those that say, ‘There is no god but Allah,’ seeking Allah’s pleasure.*’ Furthermore, the *hadith* is cited at length given the many important rulings that it outlines; as narrated in the *Sahīh* of al-Bukhāri:

Sa’eed ibn Ufayr narrated to us he said al-Layth narrated to me he said ‘Uqayl narrated to me from Ibn Shihāb, he said Maḥmud ibn al-Rabiḥ’ al-Anṣāri reported to me that that ‘Itban ibn Mālik who was one of the companions of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and one of the Ansār who took part in the battle of Badr: (he said)

⁹ *Sahīh* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 3, no. 3252]

¹⁰ *Sahīh* Muslim [Vol. 1, no. 28], *Musnad Aḥmad* [Vol. 5, no. 22727], al-Nasā’i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 6, no. 10969/109670 and 11132], al-Tabarāni *Musnad al-Shāmīeен* [Vol. 1, no. 555]

I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and said, O Messenger of Allah, I have weak eyesight and I lead my people in prayers. When it rains the water flows in the valley between me and my people so I cannot go to their mosque to lead them in prayer. O Messenger of Allah! I wish you would come to my house and pray in it so that I could take that place as a *Musalla*. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him: *Allah willing, I will do so.* The next day after the sun rose high, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and Abu Bakr came and the Messenger of Allah asked for permission to enter. I gave him permission and he did not sit on entering the house but said to me: *Where would you like me to pray?* I pointed to a place in my house.

So the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him stood there and said, ‘Allahu Akbar’, and we all got up and aligned behind him and offered a two-*rak’at* prayer and ended it with *Taslim*. We requested him to stay for a meal called *khazira*, which we had prepared for him. Many members of our family gathered in the house and one of them said, ‘Where is Malik ibn al-Dukhaishin or Ibn al-Dukhshun?’ One of them replied: ‘He is a hypocrite and does not love Allah and His Messenger.’ Upon hearing that, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *Do not say so. Haven’t you seen that he said, there is no god but Allah for Allah’s sake only?*’ He said: Allah and His Messenger know better. We have seen him helping and advising hypocrites. the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: Allah has forbidden the (Hell) fire for those who say, ‘there is no god but Allah’ for the sake of Allah only.

Ibn Shihāb said: I asked al-Ḥussain ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣāri, and he said one of Bani Salim, and he is one of the noblest of them about the *hadith* of Maḥmud ibn al-Rabiḥ’ al-Anṣāri: (he said) he spoke the truth upon that.¹¹

¹¹ *Sahīh* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 1, no. 415]. Given the length of the narrative, only the English translation is presented.

The *hadith* is recorded in many collections, including that of al-Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad.¹² Anas ibn Mālik heard the narration from it from Maḥmud ibn al-Rabih’ al-Ansāri and he liked it. Then he met ‘Itbān ibn Mālik while he was alive and heard it directly from him, ordering his son to write it down, as detailed by Imām Muslim narrated it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حدثنا شيبان بن فروخ حدثنا سليمان يعني بن المغيرة قال حدثنا ثابت عن أنس بن مالك قال حدثني محمود بن الربيع عن عتبان بن مالك قال: قدمت المدينة فلقيت عتبان، فقلت له حدثني عنك، قال: أصانني في بصرى بعض الشيء، فبعثت إلى رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، أني أحب أن تأتيني فتصلني في منزلي فلتخذه مصلني قال: فتلى النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، ومن شاء الله من أصحابه، فدخل وهو يصلي في منزلي وأصحابه يتحدون بينهم، ثم أسندوا عظم ذلك وكبره إلى مالك بن دخشم قالوا: ودوا أنه دعا عليه فهلك، ودوا أنه أصحابه شر، فقضى رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، الصلاة، وقال: أليس يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأنى رسول الله؟ قالوا: إنه يقول ذلك وما هو في قلبه، قال: لا يشهد أحد أن لا إله إلا الله وأنى رسول الله فيدخل النار أو تطعمه. قال أنس فأعجبني هذا الحديث فقلت لابني اكتبه فكتبه

Shaybān ibn Farukh narrated to us Sulaymān, that is to say Ibn al-Mugheer narrated to us he said Thābit narrated to us from Anas ibn Mālik, he said Maḥmud ibn al-Rabih’ narrated to me from ‘Itbān ibn Mālik, he said: I came to al-Medina and found ‘Itbān ibn Mālik, he said I was informed of a *hadith* about you. He said: Something had gone wrong with my eyesight. I therefore sent a message to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him: Verily it is my ardent desire that you should kindly grace my house with your presence and observe prayer there so, that I should make that corner a place of worship. He said: The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him came there, and those amongst the Companions whom Allah willed also accompanied him.

He entered and offered prayer at my residence and his Companions began to talk amongst themselves (and this conversation centered round hypocrites), and then the conspicuous one, Mālik ibn Dukhshum was made the target and they wished that he (the Prophet) should curse

¹² More than twenty references are cited in the original Arabic text concerning this *hadith*. For the sake of brevity, only a couple of the collections are recorded, references for which are: *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 1, no. 636; vol. 5, no. 5086], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 1, no. 33], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 1, no. 223; vol. 4, no. 1612, vol. 5, no. 2075] and *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 4, no. 16527/16528]

him and he should die or he should meet some calamity. In the meanwhile the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him completed his prayer and said: *Does Mālik ibn Dukhshum not testify the fact that there is no god but Allah and verily I am the Messenger of Allah?* They replied: He makes a profession of it (no doubt) but does not do it out of (sincere) heart. He (the Prophet) said: *He who testifies that there is no god but Allah and I am the Messenger of Allah would not enter Hell or its (flames) would not consume him.* Anas said: This *hadith* impressed me very much and I told my son to write it down.¹³

This rendition is also recorded in other collections, notably in the *Musnad*’s of Aḥmad and Abu Ya’la, as well as *Mu’jam al-Kabir* of al-Tabarāni, among others.¹⁴ The following is reported in *Kitāb al-Tawheed*, by Ibn Khuzaymah:

حدثنا محمد بن بشير قال حدثنا محمد بن جعفر قال حدثنا شعبة عن قتادة عن أنس بن مالك عن معاذ بن حبب قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من مات وهو يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن مُحَمَّداً رسول الله، صادقاً من قلبه دخل الجنة

Muhammad ibn Bashār narrated to us he said Muhammad ibn Ja’far narrated to us he said Shu’ba narrated to us from Qatādah from Anas ibn Mālik from Mu’ādh ibn Jabal, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Whoever dies while testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah sincerely, from the bottom of his heart, he will enter paradise.*¹⁵

Ibn Khuzaymah said: ‘Shu’ba said – I didn’t ask Qatādah as to whether he heard this or not from Anas.’ It is also cited in the *Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad, contained within the *isnād*: Muhammad ibn Ja’far narrated to us Shu’ba narrated to us.¹⁶ Other collections also have cited this narration too. Al-

¹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 1, no. 33]

¹⁴ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 3, no. 12407], *Musnad* Abu Ya’la [Vol. 3, no. 1505/1506], al-Tabarāni, *Mu’jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 18, no. 43].

¹⁵ Ibn Khuzaymah, *Kitāb al-Tawheed* [Vol. 2, p. 787]

¹⁶ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 5, no. 22056]. In his commentary upon the *Musnad*, Shu’ayb al-Arnā’uṭ says that its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two Shaykhs [sic. al-Bukhāri and Muslim]. It is also in *Shu’ab al-‘Imān* [Vol. 1, pp. 96/97]: Abu Tāhir Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmash al-Faqīhi reported to us Abu Ḥāmid Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya reported to us Ali ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Abi Esa al-Darabajardi narrated to us Muḥammad ibn ‘Arara ibn al-Barānd narrated to us Shu’ba narrated to us.’

Albāni said: ‘Its *isnād* is *Şahīh* upon the conditions of the two-Shaykhs [sic. al-Bukhāri and Muslim].’ There is no real fear of *Tadlees* (misrepresentation in reporting) here by way of *Qatādah*, particularly given the attestation that is recorded by al-Tabarāni in his *Mu’jam al-Şagheer*, namely:

حدَّثَنَا عمْرُو بْنُ مُحَمَّدَ الرَّفَاعِيُّ الْأَصْفَهَانِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْحِبَرَانِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَلَيْ بْنُ الْجَارُودَ الْأَصْبَهَانِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنُ عَمْرُو بْنِ حَفْصٍ بْنِ مَعْدَنٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا بَكْرٌ بْنُ عَبَّاسٍ الْكَلْبَانِيُّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَنَّسَ بْنَ مَالِكَ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَأَنَّهُ وَسَلَمَ مِنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ يَشْهُدُ أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّهِ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَقَالَ الطَّبَرَانِيُّ لَمْ يَرَوْهُ عَنْ شَبَّةٍ إِلَّا بَكْرٌ وَشَيْخٌ أَخْرَى مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَصَرَةِ حَنْفَى

‘Amr ibn Muḥammad al-Rifāḥi al-Asbahāni narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhim al-Ḥibrāni narrated to us Aḥmad ibn Ali ibn al-Jarud al-Asbahāni narrated to me Ibrāhim ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥafṣ ibn Ma’ān narrated to us he said Bakr ibn Bakkār narrated to us Shu’ba narrated to us ‘Abbās al-Kalbi narrated to us that he heard Anas ibn Mālik saying: the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him and his family said: *Whoever dies and he has testified that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, he will enter paradise.*

al-Tabarāni said: ‘No one narrated it on the authority of Shu’bah except for Bakr and another Ḥanafī Shaykh from the people of Basra.’¹⁷

Imām Muslim records the following narration in his collection of *Şahīh*:

حدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرٌ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَرُهْبَرٌ بْنُ حَرْبٍ كَلَاهُمَا عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلِ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٌ حَدَّثَنَا أَبْنُ عَلَيْهِ عَنْ خَالِدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي الْوَلِيدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ حُمَرَانَ عَنْ عُثْمَانَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba and Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb narrated to us, both of them narrating from Ismā’il ibn Ibrāhim he said: (from) Abu Bakr, Ibn Ulaya narrated to us from Khālid he said al-Waleed ibn Muslim narrated to me from Humrān from Uthmān, he said the Messenger of

¹⁷ al-Tabarāni, *Mu’jam al-Şagheer* [Vol. 2, no. 733]

Allah peace and blessing be upon him said: *He who died knowing (full well) that there is no god but Allah will be entered to paradise.*¹⁸

The narration is also recorded in the *Şahīh* of Ibn Ḥibbān, the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, the *Musnad* of al-Ḥumaydi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Nasā’i, and many others too. In the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim, the following is recorded:

حدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ الْحَافِظِ إِمَلَاءَ حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ السَّعْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا فُرِيسْ بْنُ أَنَسٍ حَدَّثَنَا حَبِيبُ بْنُ الشَّهِيدِ، وَأَخْبَرَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ الْقَطِيعِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنُ حَنْبَلَ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا أَبْنُ أَبِي عَدِيٍّ، عَنْ حَبِيبِ بْنِ الشَّهِيدِ، حَدَّثَنَا حُمَدَةُ بْنُ هَالَانِ حَدَّثَنَا حَصَانُ بْنُ كَاهِلٍ، وَفِي حَدِيثِ أَبْنِ أَبِي عَدِيٍّ كَاهِلٌ قَالَ: جَلَسْتُ مَجْلِسًا فِيهِ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ سَمْرَةَ وَلَا أَعْرَفُهُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي مَعَاذُ بْنُ جَبَلٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ نَفْسٌ تَمُوتُ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا شَهَدَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، يَرْجِعُ ذَلِكَ إِلَى قَلْبِ مُوقِنٍ إِلَّا غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهَا. قَالَ فَقُلْتُ أَنْتَ سَمِعْتَ مِنْ مَعْلَمٍ؟ فَعَنَقَنِي الْقَوْمُ، قَالَ دَعْوَهُ فَلَمْ يُبَيِّنْهُ الْقَوْلُ، نَعَمْ، أَنَا سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ مَعَاذَ بْنِ جَبَلٍ وَرَزَعَ مَعْلَمَ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Abu Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub al-Ḥāfiẓ narrated to us by dictation Ibrāhim ibn Abdullāh al-Sa’di narrated to us Quraysh ibn Anas narrated to us Ḥabib ibn al-Shaheed narrated to us and Aḥmad ibn Ja’far al-Qatā’i reported to us Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Hanbal narrated to us my father narrated to me Ibn Abi ‘Adi narrated to us from Ḥabib ibn al-Shaheed, Ḥumayd ibn Hilal narrated to us Ḥiṣān ibn Kāhil narrated to us and in the *hadīth* of Ibn Abi ‘Adi Kahin he said: I sat in a gathering where Abdar-Rahmān ibn Samura was, and I did not know him, and he said Mu’ādh ibn Jabal narrated to us he said, the Messenger of Allah of peace and blessing be upon him said: *No soul on earth that dies, who is not associating anything with Allah, bearing witness that I am the Messenger of Allah, from the heart with certainty, but Allah will forgive him.* He said: I said have you heard it from Mu’ādh? Then the people rebuked me, and he said, call him for he didn’t say it badly, yes, I heard it from Mu’ādh ibn Jabal and

¹⁸ *Şahīh Muslim* [Vol. 1, no. 26]. A second follow-up narration is also mentioned in the Arabic edition, broadly the same, from *Şahīh Muslim*: Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Muqadāmi narrated to us Bashr ibn al-Mufaḍal narrated to us Khālid al-Ḥudhā’ narrated to us from al-Waleed Abi Bishr, he said I heard Ḥumrān saying: I heard Uthmān saying: I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying similar to this.

Mu'ādth asserted that he heard it directly from the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him.¹⁹

Thereafter, al-Ḥākim said: 'This *ḥadīth* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* and the *thiqāt* (trustworthy narrators) have circulated it. They did not report it altogether with this reported wording, which I have done and Allah knows best. They left it to Ḥiṣān ibn Kāhil and its said, Ibn Kāhin, only Ḥumayd ibn Hilal is known (for this) in the channel of reporting. Ibn Abi Ḥātim mentioned that he narrated from him, Qurra ibn Khālid also, all of them taken from a group of *thiqāt*, so they are bound by that. And Allah knows best.'

The narration is cited across many collections of *ahādīth*, with their respective channels.²⁰ The statement of al-Ḥākim – 'Ibn Abi 'Adi narrated to us from Ḥabīb ibn al-Shāhīd,' is *wāḥid* (defective, illusory). In fact it is: 'Ibn Abi 'Adi narrated to us from al-Ḥajjāj ibn Abi Uthmān al-Ṣawāf.' I would argue that Ḥiṣān ibn Kāhil also narrated from him, al-Aswād ibn Abdar-Raḥmān al-‘Abdi; al-Ḥākim was correct in authenticating it, especially given that there is attestation for it from the following independent channels of reporting. Al-Ṭabarānī records the following in his *Mu'jam al-Kabir* with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*:

حدثنا علي بن عبد العزيز حدثنا حاجاج بن المنهاج حدثنا سعيد بن زيد قال سمعت عمرو بن دينار حدثنا جابر بن عبد الله الأنصاري قال: قال معاذ بن جبل في مرضه الذي توفي فيه لولا

¹⁹ al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak* [Vol. 1, no. 16]

²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 1, no. 203] with the *isnād*: al-Faḍl ibn al-Hubāb al-Jumāhi reported to us he said Musaddad ibn Musarhad narrated to us from Ibn Abi 'Adi he said Hajjāj al-Ṣawāf narrated to us he said Ḥumayd ibn Hilal reported to me. *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah [Vol. 2, no. 3796]: Abdūl-Ḥumayd ibn Bayyān al-Wasīti narrated to us Khalīl ibn Abdūl-Ḥumayd narrated to us from Yūnus from Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl. In the *Musnād* of Imām Āhmad [Vol. 5, no. 22051, 22053]: 'Ismā'il narrated to us Yūnus narrated to us from Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl.' And: 'Muḥammad ibn 'Adi narrated to us from al-Ḥajjāj, that is to say Ibn Abi Uthmān, Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl narrated to me.' In *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* of al-Nasā'i [Vol. 6, no. 10975, 10977]: Ziyād ibn Ayūb reported to us he said Ibn 'Ulaya narrated to us he said Yūnus narrated to us from Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl.' And: 'Amr ibn 'Alī reported to us he said Ibn Abi 'Adi narrated to us from al-Ḥajjāj ibn Ṣawāf, he said Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl, with it.' In the *Mu'jam al-Kabir* of al-Ṭabarānī [Vol. 20, no. 71/72]: 'Ali ibn Abdūl-Āzīz narrated to us Aārām Abūl-Nūmān narrated to us Ḥammād ibn Zayd narrated to us Ayūb and al-Ḥajjāj al-Ṣawāf narrated to us (*ḥawala*) and Abdūl-Ḥumayd ibn Ḥanbāl narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Maqdīsī narrated to us Ḥammād ibn Zayd narrated to us Ayūb narrated to us from Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl.' And also cited in the *Musnād* of al-Ḥumaydī [Vol. 1, no. 370]: 'Muḥammad ibn al-Zibriqān al-‘Ahwāzī Abu Hamām narrated to us he said Yūnus ibn 'Ubayd narrated to us from Ḥumayd ibn Hilāl.'

أَن تَكُلُوا حَدِيثَكُمْ حَدِيثًا سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ مَنْ مَاتَ وَفِي قَلْبِهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مَوْقَنًا دَخْلُ الْجَنَّةِ

'Ali ibn Abdūl-Āzīz narrated to us Ḥajjāj ibn al-Minhāl narrated to us Sa'eed ibn Zayd narrated to us he said I heard (from) 'Amr ibn Dīnār, Jābir ibn Abdūl-Ḥumayd al-Ansārī narrated to us he said Mu'ādth ibn Jabal said during his illness from which he passed away, were it not for you to trust, I will tell you a *ḥadīth* that I heard from the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Whoever dies and he has in his heart with certainty that there is no god but Allah, he will enter paradise.*²¹

Al-Ṭabarānī records the following in his *Mu'jam al-Kabir*:

حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ بْنُ زَبِيرِيقَ بْنِ الْعَلَاءِ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ عَيَّاشَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي عَنْ ضَمْضَمَ بْنِ زَرْعَةَ عَنْ شَرِيعَ بْنِ عَبِيدَ عَنْ مَالِكَ بْنِ يَخْمَرَ عَنْ مَعَاذَ بْنِ جَبَلَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ شَهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَرْجِعُ ذَكْرَ إِلَى قَلْبِ مَوْقَنَ دَخْلُ الْجَنَّةِ

'Amr ibn Ishāq ibn Zubrīq ibn al-‘Alā narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn 'Ayyāsh narrated to us my father narrated to us from Damdam ibn Zura'a from Shareeh ibn 'Ubāy from Mālik ibn Yukhamir from Mu'ādth ibn Jabal, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Whoever testifies with certainty in the heart that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, they will enter paradise.*²²

From Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him there is the narration where he reported that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said:

قَالَ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَا رَبِّ عَلَمْنِي شَيْئًا أَذْكُرُكَ وَأَدْعُوكَ بِهِ! قَالَ قَلْ يَا مُوسَى لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، قَالَ كُلُّ عَبْدٍ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا! قَالَ قَلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَرِيدُ شَيْئًا تَخْصِنِي بِهِ قَالَ يَا مُوسَى لَوْ أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعَ وَعَامِرُهُنَّ، وَالْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعَ فِي كَفَةٍ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فِي كَفَةٍ، مَالَتْ بَهْنَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

²¹ al-Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 20, no. 59]. It is narrated also in the *Musnād* of 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd [Vol. 1, no. 118]: Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl, and he is Abūl-Nūmān Aārām narrated to us Sa'eed ibn Zayd narrated to us he said 'Amr ibn Dīnār al-Makki, with it.

²² al-Ṭabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 20, no. 219]

Moses, peace be upon him said: 'O Lord! Teach me something with which I can remember You and invoke You by.' He said: Say, O Moses – there is no god except Allah. He (Moses) said: 'Do all your servants say so?' He said: O Moses – if the seven heavens, all that which they contain and the seven earths were put in one scale while 'there is no god but Allah' is in the other scale, the scale of 'there is no god but Allah' would weigh them down.'

The *hadith* is *ḥasan*, it is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān with the *isnād*: 'Ibn Sulm reported to us Ḥarmala ibn Yahyā narrated to us Ibn Wahb narrated to us 'Amr ibn al-Ḥārith reported to me that Darajā' narrated it from Abu al-Haytham from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri.'²³ Al-Nasā'i records this in *al-Sunan al-Kubra* in two places, with the *isnād*: Ahmād ibn 'Amr al-Sāriḥ reported to us the *hadith* from Ibn Wahb.²⁴ It is also cited in the *Musnad* of Abu Ya'la;²⁵ in the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim, he records the *isnād* as: Abul'Nadr Humman ibn Yusuf al-Faqihi reported to us Uthmān ibn Sa'eed al-Dārimi narrated to us Asbagh ibn al-Farj al-Masri narrated to us Ibn Wahb reports.' Thereafter he said: 'This *hadith* has a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, but they didn't record it.'²⁶ The next narration is recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām Muslim with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا وكيع حدثنا الأعمش عن المعمور بن سويد عن أبي ذر قال
قال رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول الله عز وجل من جاء بالحسنة فله عشر أمثالها
وأزيد؛ ومن جاء بالسيئة فجز اوه سيئة مثنتها أو أغفر؛ ومن تقرب مني شبرا تقربت منه ذراعا،
ومن تقرب مني ذراعا تقربت منه باعا ومن أتاني يمشي أتيته هرولة؛ ومن لقيني بقرب
الأرض خطيبة لا يشرك بي شيئا لقيته بمثنتها مغفرة
قال إبراهيم حدثنا الحسن بن بشر حدثنا وكيع بهذا الحديث

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Waki' narrated to us al-'Amash narrated to us from al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd from Abu Dharr, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Allah the Mighty and Sublime, stated: He who comes with goodness, there are in store for him ten like those and even more than those: And*

²³ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 14, no. 6218]

²⁴ al-Nasā'i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 6, no. 10670, 10980]

²⁵ *Musnad* Abu Ya'la [Vol. 2, no. 1393]

²⁶ al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak* [Vol. 1, no. 1936]

he who comes with vice, it is only for that that he is called to account. I even forgive him. And he who draws close to Me by the span of a palm, I draw close to him by the cubit, and he who draws close to Me by the cubit I draw close to him by the space (covered) by two hands, and he who walks towards Me I rush towards him, and he who meets Me in the state that his sins fill the earth, but not associating anything with Me, I would meet Him with the same (vastness) of pardon.

Ibrāhīm said: al-Ḥasan ibn Bishr narrated to us, Waki' narrated to us with this *hadith*.²⁷

Whether in its longer format or abridged, the content of this *hadith* with attestations has been recorded by a group of scholars too.²⁸ It is also found in the *Musnad al-Ṭayālisi* by way of another *isnād* that conforms to the conditions of the two-Shaykhs [sic. al-Bukhāri and Muslim]:

حدثنا شعبة عن واصل عن المعمور بن سويد عن أبي ذر قال قال رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال ربكم عز وجل الحسنة بعشر، والسيئة بواحدة وأغفرها؛ ومن لقيني بقرب الأرض خطيبة لا يشرك بي لقيتها بقرب الأرض مغفرة؛ ومن هم بحسنة ولم يحسنها ولم يعملها لم يكتب عليه شيء؛ ومن تقرب مني شبرا تقربت منه ذراعا، ومن تقرب مني ذراعا تقربت منه باعا تقربت منه هرولة؛ ومن لقيني بقرب الأرض خطيبة لا يشرك بي شيئا لقيتها بمثنتها مغفرة
ثم قال لم يرفعه شعبة عن واصل ورفعه الناس عن الأعمش عن المعمور

Shu'ba narrated to us from Wā'sil from al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd from Abu Dharr, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: (For) your lord, the Mighty and Sublime, the *ḥasanat* bears ten, the *sayi'at* is but one and it is forgiven. And whoever meets me with an earth full of sin and doesn't associate anything with me, I will meet him with an earth full of forgiveness. Whoever intended for a good deed and did not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him.

²⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 4, no. 2687]

²⁸ In *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 1, no. 226] with the *isnād*: 'Ahmād ibn Ali ibn al-Muthanna reported to us he said Muḥammad ibn 'Ayyād al-Makki narrated to us he said Hammād ibn Ismā'il narrated to us from Shareek from Abdul-Aziz ibn Rafi' from al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd.' In the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah [Vol. 2, no. 3821]: Ali ibn Muḥammad narrated to us Waki' narrated to us from al-'Amash. Contained within the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmād there are several mentions [Vol. 5, no. 21349, 21353 and 21359], including: Muḥammad ibn Thābit narrated to us Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭahmān narrated to us from Mansūr from Rabi' ibn Ḥirāsh from al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd.' Another channel has: 'Affān narrated to us Hamām narrated to us 'Aāsim narrated to us from al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd.' And also: 'Affān narrated to us Hammād narrated to us from Ali ibn Zayd from al-Ma'rur.'

Whoever intended for an evil deed and did not do it, nothing is to be written for him. Whoever draws close to Me by a handspan, I draw close to him by an arm's length.

Then he said: 'Shu'ba did not make it *marfu'* from Wā'sil, and the people held it as *marfu'* from al-'Amash from al-Ma'rur.'²⁹

Also cited in the *Musnad* of Ibn al-Ja'd, by way of a third-*Sahīh isnād*:

حدثنا علي بن الجعد أخبرنا عبد الحميد حدثي شهر حدثنا عبد الرحمن بن غنم أن أبا ذر حدثه عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال: إن الله تعالى يقول يا عبدي ما عبتي ورجوتي فلأنا غافر لك على ما فيك يا عبدي إن لقيتني بقرب الأرض خطبنة ما لم تشرك بي أثبتك بقربابها مغفرة

Ali ibn al-Ja'd narrated to us 'Abd al-Humayd reported to us Shahr narrated to me Abdar-Rahman ibn Ghanam narrated to us that Abu Dharr narrated it from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Indeed, Allah the Almighty says: O My servant, as long as you worship Me and ask of Me, I will forgive you for what is in you. O My servant, if you meet Me with an earth near full of sin, as long as you do not associate with Me, I will come to you with an earth full of forgiveness.*³⁰

In a slightly longer format, it is cited in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmād:

حدثنا هاشم بن القاسم حدثنا عبد الحميد حدثنا شهر حدثي بن غنم أن أبا ذر حدثه عن رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال إن الله عز وجل يقول يا عبدي ما عبتي ورجوتي فلأني غافر لك على ما كان فيك؛ ويا عبدي إن لقيتني بقرب الأرض خطبنة ما لم تشرك بي لقيتك بقربابها مغفرة وقال أبو ذر إن الله عز وجل يقول: (يا عبادي كلكم مذنب لا من أنا عافيته فذكر نحوه الا انه قال ذلك بأني جواد واحد ماجد إنما عطاني كلام

Hāshim ibn al-Qāsim narrated to us 'Abd ibn al-Ḥumayd narrated to us Shahr narrated to us Ibn Ghanam narrated to me that Abu Dharr narrated it from the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Indeed, Allah the Mighty and Sublime says – O My servant, as long as you worship Me and ask of Me, then I will forgive*

²⁹ *Musnad* al-Tayālisi [Vol. 1, no. 464]

³⁰ *Musnad* Ibn al-Ja'd [Vol. 1, no. 3423]

you for what was in you. O My servant, if you meet Me with sin as great as the earth, as long as you do not associate with Me, I will meet with you with forgiveness close to it.

And Abu Dharr said: Indeed, Allah the Mighty and Sublime says – *O My servants, all of you are sinners except those that I have saved. He mentioned that except that he said, that is because I am generous and glorious, doing what I wish. My giving is speech.*³¹

By way of a fourth-*Sahīh isnād*, which is again cited in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmād:

حدثنا عارم حدثنا مهدي بن ميمون حدثنا غيلان عن شهر بن حوشب عن معد يكرب عن أبي ذر عن النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، يرويه عن ربه قال بن آدم إنك ما دعوتني ورجوتي غفرت لك على ما كان فيك؛ بن آدم: إن تلقني بقرب الأرض خطايا لقيتك بقربابها مغفرة بعد أن لا تشرك بي شيئاً، بن آدم، إنك إن تذنب حتى يبلغ ذنبك عنان السماء ثم تستغفرني أغفر لك ولا أبالي

Aāram narrated to us Mahdi ibn Maymun narrated to us Ghaylān narrated to us from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab from Ma'd Yakrib from Abu Dharr from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he narrated it from his Lord, he said: *Son of Adam, as long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I will forgive you for what you have done. Son of Adam, if you come to Me with sins as great as the earth, I will meet you with a vessel of forgiveness, providing you do not associate anything with Me. Son of Adam, if you sin until your sin reaches the clouds of heaven, then you ask forgiveness of Me, I will forgive you and I do not mind.*³²

I would argue perhaps Ma'd Yakrib is al-Hamdāni companion, or he is the famous knight, al-Miqdām ibn Ma'diakrib. This is a preserved channel: Shahr ibn Ḥawshab narrated the *hadīth* from Abdar-Rahman ibn Ghanam al-'Ashari by dictation upon 'Abd al-Humayd Bahrām and he narrated this from Ma'd Yakrib. There is another narration which is cited in the *Sunan* of Imām Abu Esa al-Tirmidhi:

³¹ *Musnad* Ahmād [Vol. 5, no. 21406]

³² *Musnad* Ahmād [Vol. 5, no. 21510, 21544]. The latter reference has the *isnād*: 'Hammām narrated to us Aāmir al-Aḥwāl narrated to us from Shahr ibn Ḥawshab from Ma'd Yakrib.' Similar is also recorded in the *Sunan* of al-Dārimi [Vol. 2, no. 2788].

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ الْجُوهَرِيُّ الْبَصْرِيُّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا كَثِيرُ بْنُ فَانِدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عَبْدِيْ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ بَكْرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْمُزَانِيَّ، يَقُولُ حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَا أَبْنَ أَدَمَ إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجُوتَنِي غَفَرْتَ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ وَلَا أَبْلَيْ، يَا أَبْنَ أَدَمَ لَوْ بَلَغْتَ ذُنُوبَكَ عَنَّ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي غَفَرْتَ لَكَ، وَلَا أَبْلَيْ، يَا أَبْنَ أَدَمَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابَ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَاكُمْ لَقَبَّتِي لَا شُرُكَ بِي شَيْئًا لَا تَيْنُكَ بِغُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً وَقَالَ أَبُو عَيسَى التَّرمِذِيُّ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ، لَا تَعْرِفُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ

Abdullah ibn Ishāq al-Jawahiri al-Baṣrī narrated to us Abu Aāṣim narrated to us Kathir ibn Fā’id narrated to us Sa’eed ibn ‘Ubayd narrated to us he said Bakr ibn Abdullāh al-Muzāni says Anas ibn Mālik narrated to us, he said I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying: *Allah said - O son of Adam, verily as long as you call upon Me and hope in Me, I will forgive you, despite whatever may have occurred from you, and I do not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky, then you sought forgiveness from Me, I would forgive you, and I would not mind. O son of Adam, if you came to me with sins nearly as great as the earth, and then you met Me not associating anything with Me, I would come to you with forgiveness nearly as great as it.*

Abu Esa said: ‘This *hadith* is *ghareeb*, we do not know of it except from this channel of reporting.’³³

It is also reported in the work of Ibn Abi al-Dunyā which is entitled *Husn al-Dthan bi’Allah*, *Huliya al-Awliyā*, and *Jāmi’ al-‘Ulum wal’Hukam*.³⁴ Al-Tabarānī has the narration in his *Mu’jam al-Awsat*, and he said: ‘This *hadith* is not narrated from Bakr ibn Abdullāh al-Muzāni except by way of Sa’eed ibn ‘Ubayd, and not from him except by way of Kathir ibn Fā’id; Abu Aāṣim followed him (copied him) in relation to that.’³⁵ I would argue that it is not unique to Kathir ibn Fā’id, since it was also narrated by Sulm ibn Qutayba al-Bāhili, as it is outlined in *al-Tārikh al-Kabir* by al-Bukhārī.³⁶ Al-Albānī authenticated it, judging it to be *Sahīh*. Indeed it is decisively *Sahīh*, because Kathir ibn Fā’id has been followed in this, especially when considering the

³³ *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* [Vol. 5, no. 3540]

³⁴ Ibn Abi al-Dunyā, *Husn al-Dthan bi’Allah* [Vol. 1, no. 32], *Huliya al-Awliyā* [Vol. 2, p. 231] and *Jāmi’ al-‘Ulum wal’Hukam* [Vol. 3, no. 1155].

³⁵ al-Tabarānī, *Mu’jam al-Awsat* [Vol. 4, no. 4305]

³⁶ al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārikh al-Kabir* [Vol. 3, no. 1656]

aforementioned channels which bolster its attestation. As has been cited in the *‘Ilal al-Hadith* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

*I asked my father about the hadith which is narrated by Muḥammad ibn Muneeb al-Adani from Quraysh ibn Ḥayyān from Thābit al-Bunāni from Anas, from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, that he said: ‘O son of Adam, as long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I will forgive you for your sins. O son of Adam, if you were to meet me with enough sins to fill the earth, I would bring you as much forgiveness. O son of Adam, if you had committed sins until they reached the extent of heaven, and then asked Me for forgiveness after that and you would not associate anything with my, I would forgive you.’ My father said: ‘This is hadith munkar.’*³⁷

I would argue that all the narrators in the *isnād* from the first to the last are *thiqāt* (trustworthy established narrators), the *matn* (reported text) is very well upstanding. Hence, there is no import to the statement of *Ibn Abi Ḥātim* that ‘this is *hadith munkar*.’ Even if the intention was to make that judgment based upon its uniqueness, the narration of al-Tirmidhi rebukes that, praise be to Allah, Lord of all creation. Al-Tabarānī has the following narration recorded across his collections:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ إِسْحَاقَ الصِّينِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا قَيْسُ بْنُ الرَّبِيعِ عَنْ حَبِيبِ بْنِ أَبِي ثَابِتٍ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جَبِيرٍ عَنْ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ «قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بْنَ أَدَمَ إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجُوتَنِي غَفَرْتَ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ وَلَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابَ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَاكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مَا لَمْ تُشْرِكْ بِي، وَلَوْ بَلَغْتَ خَطَايَاكُمْ عَنَّ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي لَغَفَرْتَ لَكَ

Muḥammad ibn Uthmān ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Šeenei narrated to us Qays ibn al-Rabih’ narrated to us from Ḥabīb ibn Abi Thābit from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr from Ibn ‘Abbās, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Allah the Almighty has said – O son of Adam, whenever you supplicate Me and hope for (good) from Me, I will forgive you for what had been committed; and if you come to Me with as much as the earth in sins, I will grant you immediate forgiveness as long as you do not associate*

³⁷ Ibn Abi Ḥātim, *‘Ilal al-Hadith* [Vol. 5, no. 1876]

any partner with Me. And if your sins reach the sky, and then you ask My Forgiveness, I will surely forgive you.³⁸

However, the *isnād* for this narration is *daef*, due to the presence of Ibrāhim ibn Ishāq al-Seenī, he is not an authority upon which proof can be built. But perhaps it can be confirmed from Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him, because the *matn* is forthright, *Şahīh* and proven when taken together with the narrations of Abu Dharr and Anas ibn Mālik may Allah be pleased with them, but also the attestation of the additional channels. As recorded in the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim:

أَخْبَرَنِي بَكْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنَ حَمْدَانَ الصَّيْرِفِيُّ بِمَرْوَى حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الصَّمْدُ بْنُ الْفَضْلِ الْبَلْخِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصَ بْنَ عُمَرَ الْعَدْنِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ بْنُ أَيَّانَ عَنْ عَكْرَمَةَ عَنْ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَقُولُ مِنْ عِلْمِنِكُمْ أَنِّي ذُو قُرْبَةٍ عَلَى مَغْفِرَةِ الذَّنْبِ غَفَرْتُ لَهُ وَلَا أَبْلِي، مَا لَمْ يُشَرِّكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَقَالَ الْحَاكمُ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ الْإِسْنَادُ وَلَمْ يَخْرُجْ

Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamdan al-Şayrafi reported to me in Merv Abdul-Şamad ibn al-Faḍl al-Balkhi narrated to us Ḥafṣ ibn Umar al-Adani narrated to us al-Ḥākam ibn Abān narrated to us from ‘Ikrima from Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Allah the Blessed and Most High says: Whoever among you knows that I am able to forgive sins, I will forgive him and I do not mind, as long as he does not associate anything with Me.*

al-Ḥākim said: ‘This *hadīth* has a *Şahīh isnād* but they did not record it.’³⁹

Cited in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad there is another narrative:

حَدَّثَنَا سَلِيمَانُ بْنُ دَاؤِدَ أَبُو دَاؤِدَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ ثَابِتَ بْنُ ثَوْبَانَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَنْ مَكْحُولِ أَنَّ عَمَرَ بْنَ نَعِيمَ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ أَسَمَّةَ بْنِ سَلَمَانَ أَنَّ أَبَا ذَرَ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

³⁸ al-Tabarāni, *Mu’jam al-Awsat* [Vol. 5, no. 5483], *Mu’jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 12, no. 12346], and in *Mu’jam al-Şagheer* [Vol. 2, no. 820].

³⁹ al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak* [Vol. 4, no. 7676]. The narration is also reported in the *Musnad* of ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd [Vol. 1, no. 602] with the *isnād*: ‘Ibrāhim ibn al-Ḥākam ibn Abān narrated to me he said my father narrated to me.’ It is also featured in the *Mu’jam al-Kabir* of al-Tabarāni [Vol. 11, no. 11615]: ‘Abu Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥussein ibn Ghaylān al-Asbahāni narrated to us Salama ibn Shabeeb narrated to us Ibrāhim ibn al-Ḥākam ibn Abān narrated to us, with it.’

يقول: إن الله يقبل توبه عبده، أو يغفر لعبد ما لم يقع الحجاب، قالوا يا رسول الله وما الحجاب؟
قال أن تموت النفس وهي مشركة

Sulaymān ibn Dāwud Abu Dāwud narrated to us Abdar-Rahmān ibn Thābit ibn Thawbān narrated to us my father narrated to me from Makhūl that Umar ibn Nu’aym narrated it from Usāma ibn Sulaymān that Abu Dhar narrated to them that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him says: *Indeed Allah forgives His servant as long as the Hijāb has not fallen.* They said, O Messenger of Allah, and what is the *Hijāb*? He replied: *That a soul should die while associating partners with Allah.*⁴⁰

Other scholars have cited this tradition in their respective works, among them, it appears in *Şahīh* Ibn Ḥibbān, *Musnad al-Shāmīeен* of al-Tabarāni, *Musnad* Ibn al-Ja’d and in the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim.⁴¹ After citing the narration, al-Ḥākim comments: ‘This *hadīth* has a *Şahīh isnād* but they did not record it.’ And from Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْتَخْلِصُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَمْتَيْ عَلَى رُؤُسِ الْخَلَائِقِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُنَشَّرُ عَلَيْهِ تِسْعَةَ وَتِسْعِينَ سَجْلًا، كُلُّ سَجْلٍ مِثْلُ هَذَا وَأَشَارَ مِنَ الْأَفْقَإِلِيَّ الْأَفْقَإِلِيَّ، ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: أَنْتَكُمْ مَنْ هَذَا شَيْئًا؟ أَظْلَمُكُمْ كُتُبِيَ الْحَافِظُونَ؟ فَيَقُولُ لَا، يَا رَبَّ! فَيَقُولُ أَلَكَ عَذْرٌ؟ فَيَقُولُ لَا، يَا رَبَّ! فَيَقُولُ بَلِي، إِنَّكَ عَنْدَنَا حَسْنَةٌ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا ظُلْمٌ يَوْمَ الْيَوْمِ! فَيُخْرِجُ بَطَاقَةً فِيهَا أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، فَيَقُولُ الرَّجُلُ يَا رَبَّ! مَا هَذِهِ السُّجَلَاتُ؟ فَقَالَ الرَّبُّ إِنَّكَ لَا تَظْلِمُ! قَالَ أَيُّ النَّبِيُّ فَتَوْضِعُ السُّجَلَاتِ فِي كَفَّهُ، وَالْبَطَاقَةَ فِي كَفَّهُ، وَالْبَطَاقَةَ فِي كَفَّهُ، فَطَانَتِ السُّجَلَاتُ، وَثَقَلَتِ الْبَطَاقَةُ! وَلَا يَقْتَلُ مَعَ اسْمِ اللَّهِ شَيْءٌ

Indeed Allah will distinguish a man from my Ummah before all of creation on the Day of Judgement. Ninety-nine scrolls will be laid out for him, each scroll is as far as the eye can see, then He will say: Do you deny any of this? Have those who recorded this wronged you? He will say: No, O Lord! He will say: Do you have an excuse? He will say: No, O Lord! So He will say: Rather you have a good deed with us, so you shall not be wronged today. Then He will bring out a card, on it will be: I testify there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muḥammad

⁴⁰ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 5, no. 21562; also at no. 21563/21564]

⁴¹ *Şahīh* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 2, no. 626/627], al-Tabarāni, *Musnad al-Shāmīeен* [Vol. 1, no. 195], *Musnad* Ibn al-Ja’d [Vol. 1, no. 3402], al-Ḥākim *Mustadrak* [Vol. 4, no. 7660].

is His servant and Messenger. He will say: Bring your scales. He will say: O Lord! What good is this card next to these scrolls? He will say: You shall not be wronged. He said: 'his scrolls will be put on a pan (of the scale), and the card on (the other) pan: the scrolls will be light, and the card will be heavy, nothing is heavier than the Name of Allah.

Indeed, this *hadith* is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it was reported in the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim and he said of this: 'This *hadith* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* but they didn't record it in the two-collections of *Ṣaḥīḥ* [sic. al-Bukhāri and Muslim]. It is *Ṣaḥīḥ* according to the conditions set by (Imām) Muslim. It is cited on the authority of Abu Abdar-Rahman al-Hubali from Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aāṣ and ‘Aāmir ibn Yahya the Egyptian is *thiqā* (trustworthy); al-Layth ibn Sa’d is Imām and Yunus al-Muwadib are *thiqā*, agreed upon, conforming to the reporting conditions in the two-collections of *Ṣaḥīḥ*.⁴² It is also reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān, the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi, who thereafter said the *hadith* was *ḥasan, ghareeb*; the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah, the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, as well as in other collections.⁴³

10. The danger of taking partners with Allah

Explicit censure is outlined in several texts concerning the danger of taking or associating partners with Allah. In the following Qur'ānic verses, this is lucidly explained:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرِكَ بِهِ، وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ، وَمَن يُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَ إِنَّمَا عَظِيمًا

*Allah does not forgive the joining of partners with Him: anything less than that He forgives to whoever He will, but anyone who joins partners with Allah has concocted a tremendous sin.*¹

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرِكَ بِهِ، وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ، وَمَن يُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

*Allah does not forgive the worship of others beside Him - though He does forgive whoever He will for lesser sins for whoever does this has gone far, far astray.*²

حَنَفَاءُ اللَّهِ، غَيْرُ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ، وَمَن يُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ فَكَانَمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، فَخَنْطَفَهُ الطَّيْرُ، أَوْ تَهْوَى بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سُجِّيقٍ

*Devote yourselves to Allah and assign Him no partners, for the person who does so is like someone who has been hurled down from the skies and snatched up by the birds or flung to a distant place by the wind.*³

وَلَذْ قَلَّ لِقَمَانُ لَانْبِيَهُ وَهُوَ بَيْعَلَهُ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشَّرِكَ أَظْلَمُ عَظِيمٍ

⁴² al-Ḥākim *Mustadrak* [Vol. 1, no. 9, 1937]

⁴³ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 1, no. 225], *Sunan* al-Tirmidhi [Vol. 5, no. 2639], *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 2, no. 6994]. Further references mentioned in the original Arabic text include the *Musnad* of ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd [Vol. 1, no. 339] and al-Ṭabarānī’s *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 5, no. 4725].

¹ Qur’ān, 4: 48

² Qur’ān, 4: 116

³ Qur’ān, 22: 31

Luqmān counselled his son, ‘My son, do not attribute any partners to Allah: attributing partners to Him is a terrible wrong.’⁴

ولو أشركوا لحيط عنهم ما كانوا يعملون

If they had associated other gods with Him, all their deeds would have come to nothing.⁵

ولقد أوحى إليك، وإلى الذين من قبلك، لئن أشركتم ليحيط عملك، ولتكونن من الخاسرين؛ بل الله فاعبد، وكن من الشاكرين

It has already been revealed to you and to those before you: ‘If you ascribe any partner to Allah, all your work will come to nothing: you will be one of the losers. No! Worship Allah alone and be one of those who are grateful to Him.’⁶

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَيَ عَنِيدٌ، أَقِبَا فِي جَهَنَّمْ مُلْكَ حَفَّارَ عَنِيدٍ، مَنَّاعَ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدِ مُرِيبٍ، الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ الْهَا أَخْرَ فَالْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ، قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْغَيْهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

The person’s attendant will say, ‘Here is what I have prepared’, ‘Hurl every obstinate disbeliever into Hell, everyone who hindered good, was aggressive, caused others to doubt, and set up other gods alongside Allah. Hurl him into severe punishment!’ - and his [evil] companion will say, ‘Lord, I did not make him transgress; he had already gone far astray himself.’⁷

لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ الْهَا أَخْرَ فَتَنْعَدْ مَدْمُوماً مَحْذُولَاً

Set up no other god beside Allah, or you will end up disgraced and forsaken.⁸

ذَلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَى إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنِ الْحِكْمَةِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ الْهَا أَخْرَ فَتَنْقَلْ فِي جَهَنَّمْ مَلُوماً مَهْذُوراً

This is some of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you: do not set up another god beside Allah, or you will be thrown into Hell, blamed and rejected.⁹

وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Do not be one of the idolaters.¹⁰

مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ، وَاتَّقُوهُ، وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ، وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Turn to Him alone, all of you. Be mindful of Him; keep up the prayer; do not join those who ascribe partners to Allah.¹¹

Allah the Almighty quotes what His servant and Messenger Esa ibn Maryam – Jesus the son of Mary - peace be upon him and his mother, said:

لَقَدْ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرِيمٍ، وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ: يَا بْنَ إِسْرَائِيلَ، اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ، إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَمَ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ، وَمَاوَاهُ النَّارِ، وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ

Those who say, ‘Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary,’ have defied Allah. The Messiah himself said, ‘Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.’ If anyone associates others with Allah, Allah will forbid him from the garden, and hell will be his home. No one will help such evildoers.¹²

Warnings from the corpus of ahādīth

Imām Muslim records the following *Ṣaḥīḥ* tradition narrated from Jābir, may Allah be pleased with him:

وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرُ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَأَبُو كَرِبَ قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَعَاوِيَةَ عَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ عَنْ أَبِي سَفِينَيْهِ عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ أَتَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا الْمُوْجِبَتَانِ؟ قَالَ مَنْ مَاتَ لَا يَشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئاً دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَمَنْ مَاتَ يَشْرُكُ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئاً دَخَلَ النَّارَ

And Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaya and Abu Kareeb narrated to us, they said Abu Mu’āwiya narrated to us from al-‘Amash from Abi Sufyān from Jābir, he said a man came upon the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and said: O Messenger of Allah, what are the two things quite unavoidable? He replied: *He who dies without associating anyone with Allah would (necessarily) enter paradise and he who dies associating anything with Allah would enter the hell.*¹³

⁴ *Qur’ān*, 31: 13

⁵ *Qur’ān*, 6: 88

⁶ *Qur’ān*, 39: 65/66

⁷ *Qur’ān*, 50: 23/27

⁸ *Qur’ān*, 17: 22

⁹ *Qur’ān*, 17: 39

¹⁰ *Qur’ān*, 28: 27

¹¹ *Qur’ān*, 30: 31

¹² *Qur’ān*, 5: 72

¹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Vol. 1, no. 93]

The narration is reported through varying channels together with similar import of wording.¹⁴ Al-Bukhārī has the next authentic narration in his collection of *Ṣaḥīḥ*, narrated upon the authority of Abdullāh ibn Maṣ'ud may Allah be pleased with him:

حدثنا موسى بن إسماعيل حدثنا عبد الواحد حدثنا الأعمش عن شقيق عن عبد الله قال قال رسول الله كلمة وقلت أخرى من مات يجعل الله نداً أدخل النار؛ وقلت أخرى من مات لا يجعل الله نداً أدخل الجنة

Musa ibn Ismā'īl narrated to us Abdul-Wāhid narrated to us al-‘Amash narrated to us from Shāqīq from Abdullāh, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said a sentence and I said another. He said: Whoever dies while he is making partners with Allah shall be admitted to the fire. And I said the other: Whoever dies and doesn't make partners with Allah shall be admitted to paradise.¹⁵

That narration also appears in other collections, such as the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān, and at several junctures within the *Musnād* of Imām Aḥmad.¹⁶ Imām Aḥmad also has the following narration:

حدثنا أبو النضر حدثنا المسعودي عن الركين بن الربيع عن أبيه عن خريم بن فاتك قال: قال رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم الأعمال ستة والناس أربعة، فموجباتن، ومثل بمثل، والحسنة بعشرة أمثالها، والحسنة بسبعينة؛ فاما الموجبات من مات لا يشرك بالله شيئاً دخل الجنة، ومن مات يشرك بالله شيئاً دخل النار؛ وأما مثل بمثل فمن هم بحسنة حتى يشعرها قلبه ويعلم الله عز وجل ذلك منه كتبت له حسنة ومن عمل سينية كتبت عليه سينية، ومن عمل حسنة كتبت بامثالها، ومن أنفق نفقة في سبيل الله فحسنة بسبعينة؛ والناس أربعة: موسوع عليه في الدنيا مقتور عليه في الآخرة، وموسوع عليه في الآخرة مقتور عليه في الدنيا، وموسوع عليه في الدنيا والآخرة ومقتور عليه في الدنيا والآخرة

Abul’Naḍr narrated to us al-Maṣ'udi narrated to us from al-Rakeen ibn al-Rabiḥ from his father from Khuraym ibn Fātik, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *There are four types of people and six kinds of deeds: Regarding deeds, they divide into two (leading to paradise or hell) binding to one, two (by*

¹⁴ *Musnād* Aḥmad [Vol. 3, no. 14528, 14753 and 15058], al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* [Vol. 7, no. 13075], *Musnād* Abu Ya’la [Vol. 4, no. 2278], *Musnād* ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd [Vol. 1, no. 1060].

¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 6, no. 6305]

¹⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 1, no. 251], *Musnād* Aḥmad [Vol. 1, no. 3625, 4038, 4043 and 4231]

way of) a like for a like, (a deed whose reward is) ten times (the like thereof) and that whose recompense is seven-hundred times (the like thereof). The two deeds that necessitate something are: Whomsoever passes away without ascribing any partners to Allah will enter paradise and whomsoever passes away while ascribing partners to Allah, will enter the fire. The type of deed through which a person is rewarded is: Whomsoever intends doing a good deed, his heart is set on carrying it out and Allah the Almighty is aware that he wants to carry it out, then Allah the Almighty will record for him one good deed [even before he carries it out] and whomsoever carries out an evil deed, one evil deed will be recorded against him. Whomsoever carries out a good deed, will be rewarded tenfold. Whomsoever spends in the path of Allah will be rewarded seven hundred fold. There are four types of people: one who is given in abundance in both this world and the hereafter; one who is given in abundance in this world, but given in scarcity in the hereafter, one who is given in paucity in this world, but will be given in abundance in the hereafter and one who is miserable in both this world and the hereafter.¹⁷

Cited in the *Mu’jam al-Awsat* of al-Tabarānī, there is the narration from Ibn Umar:

حدثنا أَحْمَدَ قَالَ حَدَثَنَا سَعِيدَ بْنَ سَلَيْمَانَ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو عَقِيلَ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا عَمْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ عَنْ بْنِ عَمْرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ الْأَعْمَالُ سَبْعَةٌ عَمَلَنَ مُنْجِيَانَ وَعَمَلَنَ بِعَشْرَةِ أَمْثَالِهِ وَعَمَلَ بِسَبْعِينَةِ ضَعْفَهُ، وَعَمَلَ لَا يَعْلَمُ ثَوَابُ عَمَلِهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ؛ فَإِنَّمَا الْمُنْجِيَانَ فَمَنْ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ يَعْبُدُهُ مُخْلِصًا لَا يُشَرِّكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ وَمَنْ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ يُشَرِّكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَجَبَتْ لَهُ النَّارُ، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً جُزِيَّ بِهَا، وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ حَسَنَةً فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا جُزِيَّ بِسَبْعِينَةِ الْدِينَارِ بِسَبْعِينَةِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَالصَّيَامِ لَا يَعْلَمُ ثَوَابُ عَمَلِهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَقَالَ الْإِمَامُ الطَّبرَانِيُّ لَا يَرُوُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ إِلَّا عَمْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ تَفَرَّدَ بِهِ أَبُو عَقِيلَ

Aḥmad narrated to us he said Sa’eed ibn Sulaymān narrated to us he said Abu ‘Uqayl reported to us he said Umar ibn Muḥammad reported to us from Abdullāh ibn Dīnār from Ibn Umar, he said the Messenger of Allah said: *The deeds are seven, two deeds are saved, and two deeds*

¹⁷ *Musnād* Aḥmad [Vol. 4, no. 19061, 18920]

are like them. Every deed will be multiplied for him, between ten and seven hundred times; an action whose reward is known only to Allah. As for the two, he who meets Allah the Almighty, who worships Him sincerely and does not associate anything with Him will be obligated to paradise, and whoever meets Allah associating something with Him will be obligated to the fire. Whoever does a bad deed, (it will be converted) to a reward, and whoever wants to do a good deed and does not do it, he will be rewarded like it. Whoever does a good deed, he will be rewarded with a tenth. And whoever spends his money in the way of Allah, his expenditure will be doubled: the dirham is seven hundred and the dinār is seven hundred, and for the reward of fasting, no one knows its reward except Allah the Almighty.

Imām al-Tabarānī said: 'None narrate this ḥadīth from Abdullāh ibn Dīnār except Umar ibn Muḥammad, followed-on (in that respect) by Abu 'Uqayl.¹⁸

Also cited in the *Mu'jam al-Awsat* there is the narration from 'Umāra ibn Ruhwayba:

حدثنا محمد بن عبد الله الحضرمي قال حدثنا يحيى الحمانى قال حدثنا محمد بن ابى اسحاق عن عمارة بن رؤبة قال سمعت رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، يقول هما الموجبتان من مات لا يشرك بالله شيئاً دخل الجنة، ومن مات يشرك بالله شيئاً دخل النار

Muhammad ibn Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍrami narrated to us he said Yāḥyā al-Ḥimānī narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Abān narrated to us from Abu Iṣhāq from 'Umāra ibn Ruhwayba, he said I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying: *These are the two imperatives: whoever dies and doesn't associate any partners with Allah, will enter paradise. And whoever dies associating any partners with Allah will enter the fire.*¹⁹

These infallible honourable verses together with the *ahādīth* cannot be read as being licence or permission to commit sin. Habitually committing sin can cause person to become addicted to them to the extent that his heart will relapse. He may become a *murtad* (apostate) or *munāfiq* (hypocrite), rendering

¹⁸ al-Tabarānī, *Mu'jam al-Awsat* [Vol. 1, no. 865]

¹⁹ Ibid, [Vol. 5, no. 5585]

his deeds worthless. His insight may become weaker and then Satan will seduce him and manipulate his mind. Such a person will lie to Allah and may say as if Allah promises him. Allah says that He will say:

لَنْ تَمْسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً

'The Fire will only touch us for a few days.'²⁰

That saying is exactly the same saying of the Children of Israel, but Allah the Almighty reveals the lies they cling to, providing a damning indictment:

أَتَخَذُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ، بَلِّي مِنْ كَسْبِ سَيِّئَاتٍ وَأَحَاطْتُ بِهِ خَطِيئَاتٍ فَأَوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ، وَالَّذِينَ آتَنَا وَعِلْمًا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَوْلَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

They say, 'The Fire will only touch us for a few days.' Say to them, 'Have you received a promise from Allah - for Allah never breaks His promise, or are you saying things about Him of which you have no real knowledge?' Truly those who do evil and are surrounded by their sins will be the inhabitants of the Fire, there to remain, while those who believe and do good deeds will be the inhabitants of the garden, there to remain.²¹

Or such person may become stubborn to the extent that he will not necessarily deny committing sins, but then he may well begin to hate what Allah has revealed or make fun of it. By doing so, apostatising and becoming a *kāfir* rendering as fruitless all his deeds. Some of the Gnostics spoke well by remarking that '(persistently) committing sins can lead to disbelief.'

²⁰ *Qur'ān*, 2: 80

²¹ *Qur'ān*, 2: 80/82

11. The Virtue of Calling to Islam and *Tawheed*

Allah the Almighty says:

فُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَنِي؛ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Say: 'This is my way: based on clear evidence, I, and all who follow me, call [people] to Allah - glory be to Allah! I do not join others with Him.'¹

And He, the Most High, commanded His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to summarise his call in simple words:

وَالَّذِينَ أَتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَقْرَهُونَ بِمَا أُنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ وَمِنَ الْأَخْرَابِ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ بَعْضَهُ؛ فَلْيَأْمُرُوا أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ مَا بِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ حَكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا وَلِنَ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقٍِ

Those to whom We sent the Scripture rejoice in what has been revealed to you [Prophet]; some factions deny parts of it. Say, 'I am commanded to worship Allah, and not join anything with Him in worship: to Him I call [others] and to Him I shall return.' So We have sent down the *Qur'an* to give judgement in the Arabic language. If you were to follow their desires, after the knowledge that has come to you, you would have no one to guard you or protect you from Allah.²

¹ *Qur'an*, 12: 108. Alternate translations have the latter portion of the verse as: 'I am not from among the mushrikeen (polytheists).'

² *Qur'an*, 13: 36/37

From Ibn 'Abbās may Allah be pleased with him, we have the reported words he gave from the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*:

حدثنا محمد أخينا عبد الله أخينا زكريا بن إسحاق عن يحيى بن عبد الله بن صيفي عن أبي معبد مولى بن عباس عن بن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، لمعاذ بن جبل حين بعثه إلى اليمن إنك ستائي قوماً أهل كتاب، فإذا جئتهم فادعهم إلى أن يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله؛ فإنهم أطاعوا لك بذلك، فأخبرهم أن الله قد فرض عليهم خمس صلوات في كل يوم وليلة؛ فإنهم أطاعوا لك بذلك، فأخبرهم أن الله قد فرض عليهم صدقة تؤخذ من أغانيهم فترد على فقرائهم؛ فإنهم أطاعوا لك بذلك، فليأك وكرانم أموالهم؛ وانق دعوة المظلوم فإنه ليس بيته وبين الله حجاب

Muhammad narrated to us Abdulla reported to us Zakariyā ibn Ishaq reported to us from Yaḥya ibn Abdulla ibn Ṣayfi from Abu Ma'bad, *mawla* of Ibn 'Abbās, from Ibn 'Abbās may Allah be pleased with him he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said the following to Mu'ādh ibn Jabal when he sent him to Yemen: *You will go to the people of the Scripture. So, when you reach there, invite them to testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger. And if they obey you in that, tell them that Allah has enjoined on them five prayers in each day and night. And if they obey you in that tell them that Allah has made it obligatory on them to pay the charity which will be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor among them. If they obey you in that, then avoid taking the best of their possessions, and be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no screen between his invocation and Allah.*³

The narration is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, being widely reported across the entire corpus of *ahādīth*.⁴ Also reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri* is the following narration reported on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd:

حدثنا عبد الله بن مسلمة القعبي حدثنا عبد العزيز بن أبي حازم عن أبيه عن سهل بن سعد رضي الله عنه سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، يقول يوم خير لا يعطي الرأي رجلاً يفتح الله على يديه، فقاموا يرجون لذلك أيمان يعطي، فعدوا وكفهم يرجو أن يعطي، فقال أين علي؟ فقيل

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri* [Vol. 2, no. 1496, 1389]

⁴ More than fifteen references are provided in the original Arabic text for this. Suffice here though is to include reference to *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [Vol. 1, no. 19], *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* [Vol. 3, no. 625] and *Sunan Abu Dāwud* [Vol. 2, no. 1584].

يشتكي عينيه، فأمر فدعى له فبصق في عينيه فبراً مكانه حتى كأنه لم يكن به شيء فقال نفاثاتهم حتى يكثروا مثلنا، فقال: على رسلك حتى تنزل بساحتهم؛ ثم ادعهم إلى الإسلام وأخبرهم بما يجب عليهم، فوالله لأن يهدى بك رجل واحد خير لك من حمر النعم

Abdullah ibn Maslama al-Qa'abi narrated to us Abdul Aziz ibn Ḥāzim narrated to us from his father from Sahl ibn Sa'd may Allah be pleased with him, he heard the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him saying on the day of Khaybar: *I will give the flag to a person at whose hands Allah will grant victory.* So, the companions got up, wishing eagerly to see to whom the flag will be given, and every one of them wished to be given the flag. He (the Prophet) asked: *Where is Ali?* Someone informed him that he was suffering from eye-trouble. So, he ordered them to bring Ali in front of him. Then he spat in his eyes and his eyes were cured immediately as if he had never any eye-trouble. Ali said: 'We will fight with them till they become like us.' He said: *Be patient, till you face them and invite them to Islam and inform them of what Allah has enjoined upon them. By Allah! If a single person embraces Islam at your hands, that will be better for you than the red camels.*⁵

Once again this narration is *Sahīh*, indeed extremely so, containing more than one of the signs of his Prophethood, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. It is also widely reported across the entire corpus of *ahādīth*.⁶ Finally, there is the following that has also been recorded in *al-Maghāzi* of al-Wāqidi:

He (Muhammad ibn Umar al-Wāqidi) said: Usāma ibn Zayd narrated to me from his father from Atā' ibn Yassār from Abu Rāfi' he said: When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him faced him, he said: *Depart and do not turn back.* Ali said: O Messenger of Allah, what shall I do? He (the Prophet) said: *When you alight in their courtyard, do not fight them until they fight you; if they attack you, do not fight them until they kill one of you. If they kill one of you, do not fight them or blame them, but show them patience. Say to them: Will you say that there is no god but Allah? And if they say yes, say, will*

⁵ Cited in four-places within *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* [Vol. 3, no. 2783, 2847, 3498 and 3973]

⁶ More than a dozen references are provided in the original Arabic text for this tradition. Suffice here though is to include reference to *Sahīh Muslim* [Vol. 4, no. 2406], *Sahīh Ibn Ḥibbān* [Vol. 15, no. 6932], *Musnad Aḥmad* [Vol. 5, no. 22872] and *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Bayhaqī [Vol. 9, no. 18009].

*you pray? And if they say yes, say, will you take from your property and give charity to your poor? And if they yes, do not desire anything else. By Allah, may Allah guide a man by your hand, it is better for you than whatever the sun rises or sets on.*⁷

Indeed, this is how the call to Allah is undertaken: being insightful; with wisdom and good advice, even when it is being lined up to fight, to endure that with patience and endurance. Such was the conduct of the Imām of guidance, Commander of the Believers, Abu Ḥasan Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, may the blessings of Allah be upon him. It is not to be done like the deranged savages of *Dā'ish* (ISIS), the aforementioned example shows the complete contradiction with them and their utter savagery; may Allah defeat and annihilate them.



⁷ Rizwi Faizer ed. (2011), *The Life of Muhammad: al-Wāqidi's Kitāb al-Maghāzi*, (London: Routledge), [p. 528]